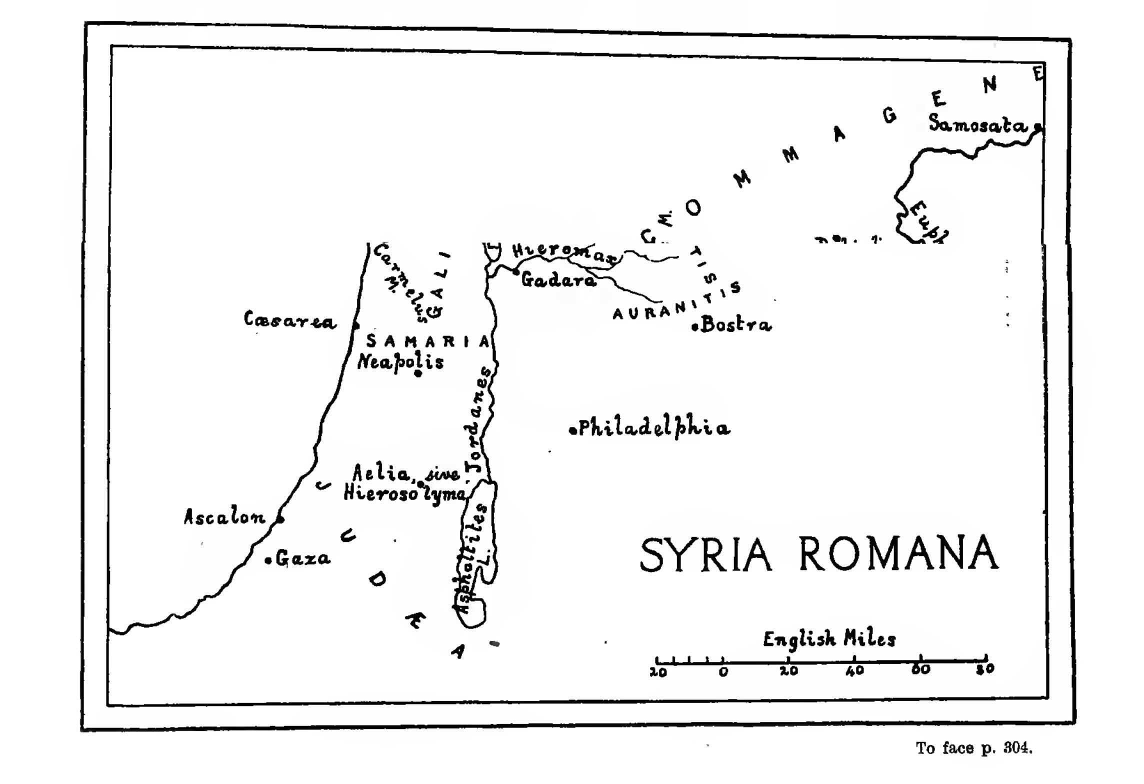
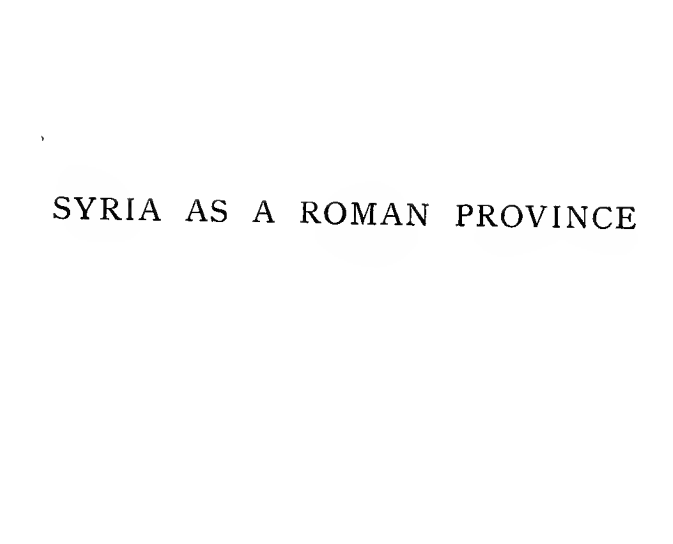



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SYRIA AS A ROMAN PROVINCE

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SYRIA AS A ROMAN PROVINCE

BY

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AUTHOR OF
"LIFE AND LETTERS IN ROMAN AFRICA," "SPAIN UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE"

WITH A MAP AND PLATE OF COINS

OXFORD
B. H. BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET
MCMXVI

PREFACE

FEW provinces present a greater contrast than Syria between the wealth and splendour of the early empire and the poverty and neglect of the present day. Now, however, there seems to be a possibility that the despotism under which both population and material resources have for centuries declined may give place to some enlightened form of administration; and interest may revive in a country to which recent historians have paid less attention than to other parts of Rome's eastern dominions.

In this sketch I have tried to give a brief account of the life and manners, the literature, and antiquities of central Syria and Phoenicia in Roman times, with occasional references to more outlying districts, such as Palmyra, Commagene, and Roman Arabia. I have not, in view of the number of readily accessible works, attempted any description of Jerusalem or the rest of the Holy Land, and for similar reasons, as well as from considerations of space, have not included any account of the development of the Christian Church in Syria, or of the works of ecclesiastical writers.

As on a former occasion, I have to acknowledge the kindness of Mr. W. G. Kendrew, M.A., in designing a map

to accompany the volume. I also desire to thank the authorities of the British Museum for providing me with some specimens, for reproduction, of casts of the provincial coin-issues, which are particularly valuable in their illustration of the religion and architecture of Syrian municipalities.

E. S. BOUCHIER.

3, WINCHESTER ROAD,
OXFORD.
November, 1915.

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(All are Bronze except No. 2.)

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[1] Nonnus (*Dion*, Bk. 40) gives a wild legend of these floating rocks which once supported an olive on which a sacred eagle was perched. As a result of an oracle from Melcarth the Tyrians were enabled to fix these off the shore, and made them the foundations of their island.



SYRIA AS A ROMAN PROVINCE

CHAPTER I

SYRIA, ITS PEOPLES AND NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

"Cessent Syri ante Latinos Romanos."—*Inscription on the borders of Arabia.*

SYRIA consists of a series of strongly marked zones; mountain ranges, long but not of very great height, valleys with luxuriant vegetation growing along the courses of rapid rivers which hardly ever admit of navigation, and towards the east stony and sandy tracts, either absolutely desert or so unproductive as only to support nomad tribes.

The sides of the mountains were anciently clothed in many parts with thick wood, which by forming a concretion of soil over the rock surface enabled plantations of various kinds to extend to a higher level than at present. As the forests were removed the violent rainstorms which prevail in the higher districts carried away the earth, leaving mere barren wastes. Similarly in the eastern areas beyond the mountain region neglect of irrigation and removal of trees have merged much that was once comparatively productive in the great desert. Of the zones referred to above, the first which presented itself to the European arriving at a Mediterranean port was a series of narrow but fertile plains, extending parallel to the coast from north to south. These were separated from one another by projections from the mountain mass behind, such as the Mons Casius

near Antioch (5,300 feet), the spurs that extend through Phoenicia towards Berytus, and Carmel in northern Palestine. The plain was narrowest in Phoenicia, but very fruitful, and contained several good harbours, now much silted up. Further south it widened to a breadth of about fifteen miles in the Vallis Saronis, or plain of Sharon, about Caesarea; beyond which it became sandy and less productive. In some places the plain extended up the great river valleys where these interrupted the line of mountains, as the plain of Antioch, reaching through the Orontes valley, or the plain of Esdraelon to the south-east of Carmel.

The next area was formed by the mountain range beginning in Mount Amanus, an offshoot of the Taurus in Asia Minor, continued southward by the Bargylus, the Lebanon (10,000 feet), and the much lower hills of central Palestine (3,000 feet). Behind these is the deep valley in which flows northwards the Orontes, the chief river of Syria, through a district once thickly populated, to its mouth below Antioch. Rising close to the latter, the Leontes (Litani) runs in the opposite direction, and breaks through the mountains to the sea near Tyre, its basin being Coele Syria, in the proper sense of that vaguely used term. The same valley, but narrower and less productive, continues through the Jordan basin with very rapid descents to the Dead Sea, and eventually along the course of the Wady el-Arabah, a desert river drying up in summer, to the Gulf of Akaba in the Red Sea.

Behind this central depression comes a high plateau, in one district—Antilibanus—rising into a definite mountain range, with Hermon (9,000 feet) as the chief peak. Elsewhere it is flat and often stony, as in the Djebel Haurân (Trachonitis and Auranitis), though enclosing some fruitful areas, especially in the once volcanic regions, and a

number of lesser rivers. Of these the Chrysorrhoas, flowing from Antilibanus to a lake near Damascus, and the Hieromax, an eastern tributary of the Jordan, passing Gadara, were the chief. On the east the plateau merged in the great desert of Syria, which contained a few oases of some extent, such as the Palmyrene territory, and some rivers which disappear in the sands, but nothing capable of extensive cultivation till the Euphrates basin was reached.

The natural defences of the country were, on the north, Mount Amanus, which could be safeguarded by a small garrison at the Syrian gates, the pass into Cilicia; on the north-east, the Euphrates; on the east and south-east, the deserts, which armies could only cross at great risk to themselves, but which needed defence against marauding tribes, either by alliances with border chieftains or by a chain of military stations.

The rivers mostly dry up to shallow streams in summer, their course is short and steep, and the only one admitting of navigation, apart from the stretch of Euphrates adjoining Syria, was the Orontes below Antioch. The harbours were few and liable to be choked up, partly (it is thought) by alluvial matter brought over from Egypt by currents setting northwards from the Delta.

The northern parts, especially those about Antioch, called by the Greeks Seleucis, were considered the coolest and healthiest, from the nearness of the great ranges of Asia Minor. The higher slopes are liable to heavy snows, which last on the summits of Lebanon for over half the year, and distinct rainy periods occur in the lowlands, the "former rain" about October, after which the sowing takes place, followed by the "latter rain," which is heavier and sometimes intermixed with snow, in December and January. The spring is liable to parching east winds from

the great desert, and in addition the southern portions, especially towards the Philistine plain, are swept by the dreaded African scirocco. The summer months are cloudless, with prevalent west winds, and in the vicinity of the sea and mountain ranges the climate is seldom tropical.

Among the richest districts was the Phœnician coast, where the plain was so narrow that rain-storms from the Mediterranean, held in by the mountains, were concentrated on a small area. Further south the rain was less, the mountains lower and less abrupt. Thus the Philistine coast, though some wine was produced, never equalled the Phoenician in fertility, and beyond this the desert has spread almost to the Mediterranean through the constant drifting of sand brought from Africa by the south-west winds. Not inferior to Phoenicia were the lower reaches of the Orontes, where the black alluvial soil, especially round Antioch, was noted for its fertility.

A country so strongly diversified naturally presented several types of inhabitants of very different degrees of advancement; and we now have to consider the attitude taken up towards them by the Romans, who became masters of the country shortly before the fall of the Republic.

It has sometimes been pointed out that while the Romans met with remarkable success in ruling a half-civilized nation, such as Spain or Gaul, in which their military government and veteran colonies developed natural resources and supplied examples or encouragement for municipal administration, law, and education, they did not always prove well adapted for the control of a people who already possessed a civilization as high as their own, though differing in kind. In such cases the chief service which they rendered was protection from external enemies or from brigandage, and they were inclined either to exploit and oppress their unwarlike subjects, as in Asia Minor,

or to isolate them, leave them alone, and allow them to sink into the lethargy of mere local municipalism.

In Syria we have examples of both classes of provincials. The rich Greek and Phoenician cities, with their fully developed city life, their extensive commerce and schools of literature and art, had no inclination to borrow much from the West, and lived their own life as before. The Romans raised taxes, decided important lawsuits, made offerings in the temples, and attended the games and festivals, but continued and were felt to be outsiders. Their literature remained a sealed book to their subjects, the assimilation of local worships to a Roman type seldom extended beyond a mere juxtaposition of names; the military expeditions, for which Syria was made a base, roused no interest in the provincials unless their own safety were threatened. On the other hand, the Arab or Aramaeo-Arab peoples east of Antilibanus were just at the stage where powerful guidance could be most serviceable. Real Roman colonies were set up among them, which, though not drawn solely from Italians, formed genuine communities, and did not, as in western Syria, consist of mere augmentations of cities of ancient civilization. The Arabs and Syrians were drafted into auxiliary corps and stationed in various parts of the empire; rings of forts were established to protect the more civilized areas, and often garrisoned with members of friendly tribes. Military high roads were constructed, and the facilities for trade which they provided encouraged many nomad clans to adopt a settled life, in place of subsisting by brigandage or by blackmailing their agricultural neighbours. As fresh waves of immigrants from the Arabian peninsula swept up, they fell into similar habits, and though, as the empire weakened, the vicious system of client princes revived and tribes had to be hired to defend the frontier, it

is extremely probable that the marvellous powers of organization, the discipline and devotion, which finally carried the Saracens as conquerors over half the empire, were in some measure due to their familiarity with Roman methods.

When the Romans arrived they found Syria in possession of Greeks and Macedonians who had settled since Alexander's conquests, and, in partial subjection to them, four chief Semitic races, more closely connected with each other than were the peoples of Europe, and at this period, with one exception, practically identical in language. The *Aramaeans*, or north Syrians, took their name from Mesopotamia, but had now spread over most of Syria outside Phoenicia and Palestine. The *Phoenicians*, whether they derived their origin from the Persian Gulf area, or, as seems more probable, from inland Palestine and adjoining districts, occupied a long strip of coast from Aradus to Dora, with towns situated on the shore, but owning territories which extended as far as or beyond Lebanon. Their language, though current till much later in their African colonies, was at this time being replaced by Greek, or, for the lower classes, by the speech of their eastern neighbours, Aramaic, and, though occasionally found on coins of the early Roman age, Phoenician ceased to be understood by any but scholars. The Phoenicians, though much mingled with Greek settlers, had not lost their individuality, which underwent a curious revival both in art and religion in the Antonine age. They were the chief survivors of the Canaanite race which existed in Old Testament times; but other branches no doubt occupied much of the land on both sides of Jordan, extending to the borders of Phoenicia on the west, but hardly distinguishable from the general Aramaeo-Arab population.

A similar mixture of races occupied Palestine, with the

addition in the north and centre of some descendants of the Assyrian settlers who were brought to replace the conquered ten tribes.

The *Jews*, while most numerous in Judæa and Galilee, had large colonies in all the great towns of Syria, and had finally abandoned their Hebrew speech in favour of Aramaic about a century before the arrival of the Romans.

East and south of all these peoples came a variety of *Arab* tribes, more or less civilized, of which in the earlier period the Nabataeans, whose capital was Petra, came most into contact with the Romans. The Ituraeans, too, were powerful in northern Palestine, and the Idumaeans, who had partially adopted Jewish customs, were settled along the south-west coast. Arabic was still extensively spoken among them, but the more settled Arab communities tended to adopt Aramaic.

Whether we should seek the origin of these Semitic peoples in the Arabian peninsula or, as some think, in the interior of north Africa, they were closely interrelated, and differed more in the degree of civilization than in disposition, language, or religion.

Traces of alien races are not extensive. The Giblites of Byblus and Berytus, once noted for their skill in masonry, represented some aboriginal race from Lebanon of unknown origin, but they were now merged with the Phoenicians. In the north, as in Commagene, Hittite settlements had once been powerful, and the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, which had its centre in northern Syria, was of Hittite or at least Anatolian origin. Some noble families, such as the royal house of Samosata, traced their ancestry to Persian sources, Persian names occur in the inscriptions of Palmyra, and both Ituraeans and Galilaeans seem to have included a Median or Iranian element dating from the time of the Assyrian conquest.

In the south-west there no doubt remained some descendants of the Philistines, whom research now proves to have been a non-Semitic people, perhaps akin to the Etruscans, who, coming last from Crete about the time of the Jewish Judges, brought letters and commercial instincts to the coast dwellers of Palestine. Of the five cities of the Old Testament period, three—Gaza, Ascalon, and Azotus—were still important under the Romans; and though the Philistine language had disappeared[1] about the fifth century B.C., the cults of Dagon-Marnas and Derceto-Aphrodite continued for some centuries longer.

A Graeco-Macedonian element existed in all the chief towns, strongest in colonies directly due to the Seleucid kings, as Antioch, Apamea, Seleucia, Chalcis or Laodicea, but important wherever trade flourished, as in the Phoenician or Philistine coast cities, or great inland centres like Damascus or Palmyra. The settlers were partly veterans, partly Greek merchants or adventurers, who from political or other reasons had left their impoverished country to seek their fortunes in the East. Some had been officially invited to settle, forming a definite community from the first; and the kings had wisely introduced the Greek city state as the unit in their kingdom in preference to the Macedonian feudal aristocracy. In fact, though Macedonians seem to have been more numerous in Syria than in any other part of Alexander's conquests, and their language influenced the spoken Greek as well as the place nomenclature, the civilization which the Romans found in western Syria was almost purely Hellenistic. The city states had to a large extent secured their independence of the central power, and were ruled by their own archons or strategi, under whom stood an elective senate, usually

[1] *Cf.* Neh. xiii. 24: "And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language."

of 500 persons, and a popular assembly, while the native Syrians lacked privileges and were chiefly artisans or slaves. In some cases, indeed, tyrants had sprung up, primarily to repel the attacks of native peoples, but without affecting the form of constitution.

That the character of the Greeks had already deteriorated is probable enough. From the first the Romans express the most unfavourable opinion of the *Syri*; they are crafty, self-seeking, unprincipled, restless, and make their living by the basest arts.[1] Indeed, a mixture of European and Asiatic strains has seldom produced a fine or vigorous race. A like fate befell the warlike Franks and Normans who a thousand years later tried to settle the country. After a century of intermarriage with Syrians and Armenians, they sank into luxury and sloth, and proved incapable of defending their principalities.

The native communities at this time stood under a variety of governments. The Semites had of themselves evolved a system of city states quite apart from the Greek, generally on an oligarchical principle such as we see at Carthage. Of these there were several at Syria, mostly with a certain Greek colouring added in the Seleucid age. Others were less centralized, and made the tribe the centre of administration rather than the city, and in some cases were still under the rule of priest-kings, who, since the days of Melchizedek of Jerusalem had been familiar to Semitic peoples. This form of government disappeared among the Jews shortly after the Romans' arrival; but in other places, as at Emesa, such rulers lasted much later, no longer, perhaps,

[1] Cic. *Prov. Cons.* v. 10; Juv. iii. 62 *seq.*, viii. 160; Salv. *Gub. D.* iv. 14; Zon. xii. 3 (Avidius Cassius), *Σύρος ἦν ἀνὴρ δ' ἄριστος*; Herodian ii. 7, *φύσει δὲ κοῦφον τὸ Σύρων ἔθνος, ἐς καινοτομίαν τε τῶν καθεστηκότων ἐπιτηδεῖον*; Suid. *Σύροι πρὸς Φοίνικας· ἑκάτερα τὰ ἔθνη διαβέβληται ὡς πανοῦργα.* Theophanes, p. 329, *κακοῦργος τῇ τῶν Σύρων ἐμφύτῳ πονηρίᾳ.*

as in earlier times, being regarded as actually an incarnation of the deity, but in constant communication with him, living a life apart, and little bound by constitutional custom. It was surely one of the strangest chances in Roman history which brought one of these Syrophoenician representatives of Baal to the throne of the Caesars and Antonines. On the eastern frontiers were the still looser organizations of Arab tribes, in some cases professing allegiance to a central chief, but really split up into a number of hordes under military rule.

The Romans on the whole displayed remarkable toleration of such diversities. The Hellenistic communities, provided the assembly were not given too much power and the senate were kept fairly exclusive, supplied a ready-made municipal system. The tyrants, indeed, soon disappeared, but as the Romans now guaranteed protection, they were not regretted, and a real service was done by the deliverance of Greek cities from neighbouring Semitic princes, Jew or Arab. The oligarchical Semitic cities also needed little change, while the theocracies were treated with respect. The Jewish high-priest, though no longer a king, was still under the Romans a nominee of native princes; the priest of Emesa retained his political authority till the second century. As late as the third century an imperial edict confirms to the shrine of a local Baal, the god of Baetocaece, north-east of Tripolis, the revenues of the village which had been granted him by a member of the Seleucid house.[1]

Aramaic was the ordinary language in most of the native principalities, as well as of the country people and lower-class town population within the province. It may not have been much used for business in the commercial centres, where Greek prevailed, nor in the earlier

[1] C. I. L. iii. 184; *cf. Rev. Archéol.*, 1897, p. 391.

period for literature. Yet it was sufficiently important for a double version, in Greek and Aramaic, of public acts to be set up in some places, as at Palmyra; it was carried to the West by soldiers and other settlers, and occasionally occurs on Western inscriptions in conjunction with Greek or Latin. A few common phrases were known to most of the Greeks of Syria, and the popular nicknames conferred on the later Seleucid kings, as Balas, Zabinas, Siripides, were frequently Semitic. There was no fusion of the two languages, the wide differences of structure between an Aryan and a Semitic speech making this unlikely; but, as with Spanish and Arabic, each borrowed certain words from the other. Loan words taken over by the Septuagint and New Testament writers from Hebrew and Aramaic are numerous, while Semitic scholars point to several Syriac words which are modelled clearly on Greek originals. So in Greek inscriptions the vowel endings of the various cases are frequently confused, as was natural with a people whose vernacular was weak in vowels.

The extent to which Aramaic continued in popular use is indicated by the number of towns which had a double name, Greek and Semitic,[1] in classical times, the latter almost always prevailing. Cities of purely Greek origin, as Antioch or Laodicea, are still known by a corrupted form of the originals, but for Hierapolis-Bambyce (Membij), Beroea-Chaleb (Aleppo), Epiphania-Hamath (Hama), the native title subsists little changed. Many persons of Syrian origin similarly had double names, of which the New Testament offers several examples. So the Palmyrene prince, Wahballath, or "gift of Allath," an Arabian goddess identified with Athena, was also known as Atheno-

[1] *Cf.* Amm. xiv. 8, 5: "Licet Graecis nominibus appellentur primogenia tamen non amittunt, quae iis Assyria lingua institutores veteres indiderunt."

dorus, and inscriptions refer to such gods as Zeus Belos or Jupiter Balmarcodes.

The modern distinction between Syriac and Aramaic, by which the former is limited to the speech of the north-east districts, with Hierapolis, Beroea, and Mesopotamia, though corresponding to a real difference of dialect, as in the use of the article, the conjugation of verbs, and even in vocabulary, has no historical justification. The inhabitants of Syria proper in early Christian days claimed to speak Syriac as much as the men of Edessa; but the great literary importance of the latter school, and especially the spread of Monophysite doctrines, which were contained in works written in the eastern dialect, have led to the restriction of the term Syriac to that dialect. Aramaic, besides being spoken in Roman times over all central Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine, was readily adopted by the more settled Arab peoples on the east, as at Palmyra and among the Nabataeans; and its descendant still holds its ground against Arabic in a few remote valleys. Semitic inscriptions are fairly frequent in the Roman age along the eastern borders of the province, sometimes with a Greek translation in addition. In the later period they are often cut in relief, instead of being incised. Greek inscriptions in parts where the native dialect had not attained to the dignity of written use show the influence of Semitic idiom.[1]

It may seem strange that Greek occurs so much more frequently than Latin in a country where the native language was totally different from both, but which was under Roman rule for a longer period than under that of the Seleucid kings, and was more thoroughly reduced and organized by the Romans. The Greek-speaking settlers, however, far outnumbered the Romans, who planted few

[1] *Cf.* Prentice in *Hermes* xxxvii. 98 and 118.

colonies, and usually communicated with the natives through Greek. The Romans, too, in spite of their organizing power, proved unsympathetic masters, respecting, indeed, native institutions, if not conducive to disaffection, but seldom seeking to understand them or to appreciate the character of their subjects. How little should we know, for instance, of Cilicia if we had to depend on Cicero's letters from that province.

The Greeks, on the other hand, were full of curiosity, and delighted in collecting strange customs and noting the products and industries of foreign parts. It is true that their observations are less valuable from their determination to find, if possible, a Greek origin, but at any rate a definite and tangible explanation for any name or custom which they did not understand. Immemorial custom, of itself all-powerful with the Oriental, was an insufficient explanation unless reinforced by some supposed oracle or mythological event. It was an ancient oracle that prevented the feeble Sabaean kings from ever leaving their palace,[1] and the same writer, in describing the ordinary life of a nomad tribe, states that the Nabataeans were forbidden to plant fruit-trees, drink wine, or build houses. The fact that some Arabs abstained from strong drink is given a mythological ground by the late Greek poet Nonnus,[2] who, following a hint in Diodorus, speaks of the Greek wine-god as "passing Tyre and Byblus, the fragrant Adonis river, and the resort of Cypris till he entered Arabia," admiring the fragrant trees, the high-placed towers where the javelin-throwers dwelt. But Lycurgus, the son of Ares, was a fierce king there, who was wont to murder strangers, sacrificing them to his father and placing their heads over his vestibule. Stirred up by Iris, Hera's messenger, he put Bacchus and the Bacchantes

[1] Diod. iii. 47.

[2] *Dion.* xx. 143 *seq.*

to flight, and drove them into the sea in the neighbourhood of Carmel. The long and unpleasant story of Combabus and Stratonice in Lucian's *De dea Syria* is another example of the mythopoeic talent of the Greeks, applied to an old Semitic custom which a Roman would have taken for granted.

Apart from the Jews, very slight active resistance was made by the Syrians to the superficial Romanizing of their country. Not only was the Roman yoke accepted without opposition, but, with the exception of the ambitious designs of the Arab dynasty of Palmyra, no serious attempt was made to throw it off. Syria had never been a nation, and had no desire to exchange the rule of Rome for a Parthian despotism. Roman weights, measures, and coinage were very generally adopted, the local calendars mostly gave place to the Roman, even when Macedonian month-names were retained; the commonest era for individual towns was the year in which they had been incorporated in the empire. Latin was the official speech of the magisstrates, and imperial edicts were exhibited in Latin, usually in combination with a Greek translation.[1] It was also used in the more formal parts of a case tried before a Roman official, though the actual pleadings and testimony might be in Greek. Citizens' wills were expected to be in Latin, but municipal business outside colonies would be conducted in Greek, and from Trajan's time Greek lettering becomes normal on the coinage. Latin was spoken by the lower class of settlers, soldiers, traders, and the various subordinate officials, and many Syrian inscriptions in Latin are due to such persons, often ignorantly phrased, but not such as would come from foreigners. Enfranchised Syrians, such as soldiers who obtained the citizenship on discharge from the army, tended to adopt Roman names,

[1] Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 190 and 319 (Tyre and Sidon).

or at least a Roman praenomen, which was thought to lend dignity to the original Greek or Aramaic designation.

The passive resistance which the eastern provinces opposed to the Romanizing process is only part of their traditional character. The Syrians appreciated the benefits of the *pax Romana*, and, though they cared little about expeditions against Parthia, heartily supported the empire both in the Jewish revolts and in the rebellion of Zenobia.

A few of the customs and characteristics of the native peoples may be added, but the lack of anthropological interests among the ancients, and the extent to which contemporary literature confines itself to the mainly Hellenized great cities, must make even a sketch very inadequate.

Though polygamy was established in Parthia, Armenia and Arabia,[1] there are no clear references to its prevalence in the settled parts of Syria in Roman times. It is to the credit of the Seleucid kings that they refrained from following the example of their eastern neighbours in maintaining a harem, and Roman law never recognized anything but monogamy. The religious customs of many Semitic centres, however, show that this did not rest on any very firm basis. Circumcision was common, but not universal, among the Semitic peoples, being, for instance, disused by the Phoenicians, possibly as a result of their contact with the Philistines, who once occupied much of the southerly coast.[2]

The amusements most often mentioned are of the ordinary Greek type — chariot-racing, musical competitions,

[1] *Cf.* Strab. xvi. 4, 25, for polyandry among the Arabs, and *Expositio* 20, "Saraceni quibus mulieres imperare dicuntur," as having a matriarchal system of inheritance; also *F. H. Gr.* v. 92, and, for the difficulty of enforcing Roman marriage law in Mesopotamia, *Just.* Const. 57.

[2] *Cf.* Hdt. ii. 104.

theatrical performances, wrestling, etc., and traces of amphitheatres, theatres and circuses are somewhat frequent in the larger towns. Syrians who showed skill in these often found employment in the European provinces. The number of public festivals at all the chief cities was large, and even when held in honour of some native deity they usually received Greek names, as *Olympia*, *Pythia*, *Actia*, professional athletes touring about from one place to another to take part. Thus a third-century inscription[1] records the exploits of a noted racer and boxer, Aurelius Septimius, of Laodicea, who as boy, youth, and man won a great number of prizes, either wreaths or talents of money, at Tyre, Laodicea, Ascalon, Sidon, Hierapolis, Beroea, Apamea, Chalcis, and many other places in and out of Syria. Local coinages have constant reference to these contests, the supervision of which must have been one of the chief cares of magistrates and priests, and in spite of their heathen associations many long outlived the adoption of Christianity.

In the eastern parts races of dromedaries were popular, and the monuments show that bears, wild boars, antelopes, gazelles, etc., were hunted by archers or mounted lancers, sometimes accompanied by hounds. It was not, however, these more manly sports with which Syrians were most identified in the Roman mind. Mimes, conjurers, jesters, flute-players, harpers, performers on pipes and castanets, and entertainers of every kind, spread over the West under the empire, or served to amuse the rich and indolent population of the great coast towns of Syria. The variety of musical instruments in constant use, both wind and stringed, was remarkable. Women played on flutes or pipes, or on the triangular harp, *sambuca*, and in large towns both in Syria and other provinces such musicians

[1] C. I. G. iii. 4472.

and professional dancers formed regular troupes which were hired to perform at entertainments and banquets. The timbrel which accompanied religious processions was regarded as a national instrument.[1] Thus, when the dissolute emperor, L. Verus,[2] after fighting by deputy several hard campaigns against the Parthians, amusing himself meanwhile at Laodicea and Daphne, finally returned to Italy, the train of musicians, actors, and buffoons which he brought with him sensibly affected the taste of the time.

Costumes, apart from those of European settlers or high functionaries, some of whom tried to keep up the toga, were brilliant in colour and often richly jewelled. They are chiefly known from the statues and paintings which decorated sepulchral towers or rock-hewn tombs, especially in the Palmyra district; and in such cases they mostly represent the festal attire of the upper classes. Linen, or, for the rich, silk, was preferred to wool, which is mentioned as one of the dislikes of Elagabalus, who refused to wear the ordinary toga. Priests had purple-dyed robes embroidered with gold, reaching to the wrist and ankle, a jewelled crown, bracelets, necklets, and white linen shoes.[3] On inscribed tablets they are represented with veils and a curved sacrificial knife.[4] In the Palmyra effigies men are shown bearded, with short hair and *chiton;* they sometimes wear a necklace and pointed head-dress, or a tall bonnet encircled with a wreath, and a kind of fringed toga. Women regularly wear veils, which often form the only head-dress, sometimes brought round the head like a hood, so as to resemble the *izâr* still worn in Syria. They

[1] Juv. iii. 64; *cf.* Liv. 39, 6; Hor. *Sat.* i. 2, 1; Plaut. *Stich.* ii. 3, 356; *Expositio,* 22; Sid. *Ep.* i. 8 (at Ravenna), "Syri psallunt." So Athenaeus (xv. 53) refers to the rude comic songs of the Phoenicians.

[2] Capit. *Ver.* 8. [3] *Cf.* Hdn. v. 3 *seq.* [4] C. I. L. vi. 710.

have frontlets or jewels fixed on the forehead, like some of the divine statues, necklace, pearl ear-rings, anklets, and a girded *chiton* over flowing robes of an Oriental character.[1] Their statues sometimes exhibit tattooing on the chest, a custom still subsisting. In contrast to such finery the ruder Arab tribes were clad in skins, or wore little but a loin-cloth and sandals, their sheikhs, according to Strabo,[2] being distinguished by a purple robe.

[1] Simonsen, *Sculp. et Inscr. de Palmyre;* Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom.*

[2] xvi. 4.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION OF THE PROVINCE TO THE ANTONINE AGE

τήν τε κοίλην Συρίαν καὶ τὴν Φοινίκην, ἄρτι τε βασιλέων ἀπηλλαγμένην καὶ ὑπό τε τῶν Ἀράβων καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ Τιγράνου κεκακωμένας συνεστήσατο ὁ Πομπήϊος. DION CASSIUS.

THE battle of Ipsus (301 B.C.) placed Alexander's successful marshal Seleucus, hitherto satrap of Babylonia, in possession of all northern Syria, as far south probably as the river Eleutherus near Tripolis, and twenty years later the overthrow of Lysimachus at Corupedion added all the Macedonian possessions in Asia Minor. This immense realm was governed from three separate capitals, Antioch in Syria, Seleucia on Tigris, the head of the eastern satrapies, and Sardes, the seat of the government in Asia Minor. The last district was greatly weakened by the incursion and settlement of the fierce Galatians soon after the fall of Lysimachus; and though the eastern possessions were retained for a time, the main interests of the Seleucid family were now centred on the Mediterranean sea-board, whence they engaged in rivalry with the other Macedonian kings. Thus native powers were allowed to grow up in the interior, and the Parthian revolt of about 250 B.C. resulted in the loss of most of the Mesopotamian and Babylonian areas, and in the isolation of the Greek kingdom of Bactria, which gradually became assimilated to its Indian surroundings. Greek and native princes were also springing up in Asia

Minor, and after the decisive defeat of the Seleucid army by the Romans at Magnesia in 190, the Taurus range was left as the northern boundary of the kings' dominions. Coele-Syria for some time remained a bone of contention between the Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties, but in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164) the dominion of the Seleucids was compensated for losses in the north by an extension to the frontiers of Egypt, so that it now became co-extensive with Syria.

The next century presents a confused picture of native revolts, internal dissensions, and a gradual loss of territory, due to the elevation of local dynasts or the freeing of large towns with a Greek constitution. The Seleucids, a race of warriors to the last, again and again gathered mercenaries to recover their lost possessions in the East, but they had no national spirit to which to appeal. The Macedonian settlers had degenerated through the admixture of Asiatics, suicidal struggles with Egypt only weakened both realms, and family quarrels constantly gave rise to temporary subdivisions of the remaining territory. The Maccabean revolt had robbed the kings of Judaea, and the adjoining districts were successively occupied by Jewish or Arab princes, till all Palestine was lost. The Phoenician cities established their freedom, and Arab tribes began to extend their dominions through central Syria to the Mediterranean.

At this juncture the native kingdom of Armenia reached the height of its power. Parthia was then weak through internal discord, and the ambitious Armenian king Tigranes, in close alliance with Mithridates of Pontus, not only annexed several border districts of Parthia, but overran all northern Syria except the port of Seleucia (83 B.C.). The Seleucids disappeared, an Armenian governor was established at Antioch as satrap of Syria and Cilicia, and a number of frontier districts were placed under Arab

chiefs as vassals of Armenia. By 74 B.C. the Armenians had occupied Ptolemais, and were already threatening the Jews, whose kingdom had also then attained its greatest extension, when the arrival of Lucullus in Asia obviated the very pressing danger of the absorption of all Greek civilization in these parts by barbarian powers.

Tigranes' rule in Syria had not been recognized by Rome, but the senate had taken no steps against him, and the forces of Lucullus were primarily directed against the king of Pontus. After several defeats Mithridates took refuge in Armenia, the country of his ally, and Lucullus despatched a legate to Tigranes at Antioch to demand his surrender (70 B.C.). His refusal was the signal for war. Armenia was invaded, and Tigranes found himself forced to withdraw his garrisons from Syria. Outside Tigranocerta the Armenians were utterly defeated, and Lucullus received offers of submission from rulers in all parts of Syria, Greek, Arab, or Jewish. The district of Antioch had been reoccupied by a Seleucid prince, Antiochus Asiaticus, and his claims were now acknowledged by Lucullus, who, however, had not time to repel Arab and Jewish encroachments on the remains of the Seleucid empire. At the same time an agreement, which lasted for many generations, was made with Parthia, fixing the Euphrates as the boundary between Roman and Arsacid spheres of influence.

When the Roman general was obliged, owing to a mutiny, to retire to the west of Asia Minor, Syria again became a prey to the machinations of the petty Arab princes whom Lucullus had been unable to dispossess. Plots were formed to share what little was left of the Seleucid kingdom, and King Antiochus was inveigled into the power of a professed ally, Sampsigeramus of Emesa, the ancestor of a famous line of rulers.

Under the Manilian law Lucullus was superseded by Pompey, who took active measures to curb the insolence of the Asiatic princes. He renewed the agreement with Parthia, invaded Pontus, and put Mithridates to flight. Tigranes was obliged to negotiate a separate peace with Rome, being strictly limited to his own kingdom, and resigning all claims to Asia Minor and Syria. The Roman general now had time, first through legates, then by personal visits to Antioch, Damascus, and other towns, to regulate the affairs of Syria, which was in indescribable confusion.

Agriculture and commerce, both by land and sea, were languishing; northern Syria, except a few towns towards the coast, was almost entirely in the hands of Arab chiefs. Even the cities were in many cases held by Arab or Syrian tyrants, Damascus, for instance, having placed itself under the protection of the Arab king of Petra. Judaea was convulsed by civil war, the Pharisees, supported by this same king, pressing the claims of Hyrcanus against his brother Aristobulus. Antiochus, the only lawful king of Syria, was a prisoner with the Arabs, who ultimately put him to death.

Though the Seleucid did not fail to put forward his claims, Pompey wisely recognized that direct Roman rule was necessary if Syria was not to revert to barbarism.

Yet it was felt that to Romanize it thoroughly would need too large forces and too elaborate a system of government. Thus, though the province of Syria dates from 64 B.C., the area placed under the early proconsuls was comparatively small, and Pompey decided to rely primarily on the towns, which already had a definite municipal organization, and for remoter districts on the native princes.

No great exercise of force was needed. The Greeks welcomed the disappearance of an anarchy which crippled their commercial activity; the robber chiefs, some of whom

had set themselves up in the coast towns or occupied castles among the mountains, were arrested and executed. Arab dynasts possessing a more legitimate authority were restricted to their original domains. The Jews were required to give up the cities with a Greek constitution in the north and west of Palestine. These received internal freedom under the supervision of the provincial governor, and a like arrangement was made for Antioch and Seleucia. Judaea was left as a subject principality, and the resistance of the more fanatical element was repressed by force. A few fresh cities were laid out in Coele-Syria by drawing together inhabitants of adjoining villages, and most of the domain land which the Romans inherited from earlier governments was used up in the foundation of new and enlargement of old settlements. A certain Roman element now appears in many of the towns, and bilingual edicts in Greek and Latin were issued for them, but no organized colonization took place before the time of Augustus.

Thus, both for purposes of defence against the monarchies of the Far East and in order to secure the great trade routes of Upper Asia, the Romans, with little trouble to themselves, had gained possession of a large country, utterly alien in race and feeling, and incapable of being assimilated. Syria supplied the shortest approach from the Mediterranean world to the oldest seats of civilization, and from the latter there spread a constant stream of Asiatic influences, which counteracted and eventually overpowered the Western civilization which both Greeks and Romans strove to introduce. Even the Greeks formed a minority of the population, and were by this time themselves much Orientalized. The extent to which the hybrid civilization thus formed reacted on the politics, art, religion, and literature of the West will be referred to in the following pages.

Pompey's organization, though little is known of its details, was carefully thought out, and several of his regulations lasted far into the imperial age. Native princes retained their dominions, but only on condition of their not containing towns suitable for self-government, and a fine or annual tribute was imposed on them.[1] The privileges of towns, whether Greek or Syrian, were carefully regulated, but they usually preserved their internal constitution on payment of tribute. The most favoured class, or free cities, retained their chief magistrates—archons or strategi—with a senate numbering in some cases 500 members. The Romans encouraged the maintenance of a high property qualification, which practically limited political power to the wealthy.[2] One result of this patronage of towns was that, while many places had been ruined and deserted in the Seleucid period, not a single organized community can be shown to have met this fate in the centuries of Roman rule. Many inland towns are still well preserved, and the obliteration of most of the coast cities seems largely due to the eagerness with which the Crusaders seized on any materials suitable for their own fortifications.

What dues were payable by urban communities and native states to the Roman government in the earlier period is a matter of conjecture. In most cases the decision apparently rested with the individual governors. Thus Laodicea, in view of its sufferings in the Caesarean cause, was freed from tribute by Antony, and other places which had supported the liberators had heavy dues imposed.[3] Many Syrian towns also were presented to Cleopatra as a private source of revenue by the same general.

[1] *Cf.* Cic. *ad Att.* ii. 16: Nunc vero Sampsigerame quid dices? Vectigal te nobis in monte Libano constituisse.

[2] Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 5, 4; *cf.* xiii. 13, 3.

[3] App. *B.C.* v. 7.

Velleius[1] mentions that Syria became a stipendiary province in the time of Pompey, and the probable procedure was to divide the country, perhaps with the exception of a few free states, into tax-paying areas or communities, among which was distributed the whole *stipendium* to be raised. It is doubtful whether this was a fixed sum; more likely some special proportion of the produce was exacted from the landowners, and this, until the survey was carried out under Augustus, can only have been estimated according to the census of previous governments. When such a land-tax was insufficient, a further personal tax was levied on trades and incomes, which under the empire amounted to one-hundredth of the assessed property.[2] Male persons between fourteen and sixty-five, female between twelve and sixty-five, were liable to this in Syria;[3] and with the poor it probably took the form of a mere poll-tax. Districts near garrison towns had to supply the soldiers with *annona militaris*, a levy payable in kind, but perhaps accompanied by a corresponding reduction in the land-tax.

Custom dues levied on articles of luxury brought into Syria across the Euphrates or by the Red Sea ports were heavy, but they would not weigh severely on the provincials, as the majority of the goods were re-exported to Italy and the West, where they fetched immense sums. Mines, which elsewhere formed a large source of revenue, hardly existed in Syria, and domain lands were not extensive.

Before leaving Asia Pompey planned the reduction of Petra, which would have opened up some important trade routes. Jewish revolts and the necessity of returning to Italy prevented this, and the Nabataean war was left to his lieutenant Scaurus. The latter, though aided by a

[1] ii. 37. [2] App. *Syr.* 50. [3] Ulp. *Dig.* 50, 15, 3.

Jewish contingent, met with little success in a campaign beyond Jordan, and King Aretas at last bought from him the right of retaining his dominions, including the city of Damascus. Coins issued by Scaurus, with empty boastfulness, show the king approaching him as a suppliant, leading a camel and holding out an olive-branch. Scaurus, who had been quaestor under Pompey, remained as governor *pro praetore*, and he was followed by two other propraetors. From 57 B.C. onwards a proconsul commanding a powerful army occupied the governor's quarters at Antioch, assisted by a quaestor in the collection of the revenues, while representatives of the tax-farming companies were soon established throughout the province.

The first proconsul was A. Gabinius (57-55 B.C.), the proposer of the law which first set up Pompey's power in the East, and himself familiar with Syria from having acted there as that general's legate. In spite of Cicero's invectives in the *de provinciis consularibus*, it is clear that Gabinius was a man of uncommon ability and independence. He made a determined attempt to control the extortions of the publicans, those curses of all the eastern provinces, and exempted several communities which had suffered in recent troubles from payment altogether. He realized that the powerful Jewish monarchy was a standing menace to the safety of the province, and set himself to crush out the remains of opposition. The high-priest Hyrcanus was deprived of his royal rank, and Judaea was subjected to heavy taxation and divided into five little cantons, each under its own council or Sanhedrin. As a counterpoise to the Jews, he had rebuilt a number of Graeco-Syrian towns, such as Samaria, Scythopolis, Dora, and Gaza, which the Asmonean princes had destroyed. Disregarding the vacillation of the senate, he boldly ended the anarchy in Egypt by restoring King Ptolemy Auletes,

and took up a firm attitude towards the Parthians, who, since the humiliation of Armenia and its subordination to Roman influence, became the chief enemies of the Republic in the East.

If we consider the interests of Syria as a whole, it is to be regretted that Caesar and Augustus, partly to escape having to defend the south-eastern frontier, partly worked on by the flattery of the Idumaean upstarts who professed to speak in the name of the Jewish nation, reversed the arrangements of Gabinius, again made Greek cities subject to native rulers, and allowed to the only people in Syria which really shrank from foreign rule an opportunity for rousing their spirit to the pitch of organized revolt.

The subject of Armenian relations was also a very serious one. The friendship of this nation, which could not long be held down by force, was very necessary for the safety of merchants passing between Mesopotamia and northern Syria; and though the people inclined to Rome as the more distant and thus less formidable suzerain, the Parthians constantly strove to reduce the country to the position of an appanage of a younger son of their own royal house.

The successor of Gabinius was the triumvir M. Crassus, whose insatiable avarice induced him to attempt the invasion of the Parthian dominions, the wealth of which was looked upon as inexhaustible. As with most Parthian wars for the next two centuries, encroachments on Armenia were made by him the pretext. It is unnecessary to detail the events of the fatal campaign of Carrhae, from which the wreck of the murdered proconsul's army was saved by the able quaestor Cassius, afterwards one of Caesar's murderers. Realizing that the Roman hold on all Syria was jeopardized by this disaster, Cassius hastened to put the province into a state of defence, repressed Jewish

risings, and when the great Parthian invasion came in 51 B.C. he threw himself into Antioch, and, being now at the head of two legions, prepared for a determined resistance. The enemy, however, had no liking for long sieges, and retired along the Orontes valley, and ultimately, owing to internal dissensions, withdrew from Syria.

Syrian detachments aided Pompey in the earlier part of the Civil War, but after the battle of Pharsalus the province, which lacked a regular garrison, readily espoused Caesar's cause It even rendered him a great service in the Alexandrine War, when a motley army of Jews, Ituraeans, and Arabs, under the command of a son of Mithridates of Pontus, helped to deliver him from the Egyptian insurgents. During his march against Pharnaces Caesar made some stay in Syria (47 B.C.), and conferred privileges on several cities. A reaction took place on his departure. Caecilius Bassus, a Pompeian leader who had been living in retirement at Tyre, corrupted part of the army left by Caesar, and making Apamea his headquarters, and supported by several Arab chiefs, held out against all the Caesarean leaders.[1]

Syria thus came to play a part of some importance in the civil wars following Caesar's murder. Cassius, whose energetic defence of the province against Parthia was still remembered, received ready assistance both from the Roman armies already in Syria and from various native princes, of whom one of the most important was the future king of Judaea, Herod. He was thus enabled to overpower the Caesarean leader Dolabella, who made Laodicea his headquarters, and carried a considerable force into Europe to join to that of Brutus.

After the battle of Philippi Antony was charged with the settlement of the East, which he found in great con-

[1] App. *B.C.* iii. 77.

fusion. The Parthian inroads after the defeat of Crassus had resulted in the revival of several of the local tyrants, who rested for support on the favour of the Arsacidae. The party of the liberators, in their urgent need of men and money, had encouraged pretenders of this kind,[1] and a large part of Syria was now divided into such petty states. Antony's policy was not wholly conciliatory. Many of the tyrants were indeed dispossessed, carrying their wrongs to the court of Ctesiphon, but heavy dues were imposed on the Syrian towns, soldiers were quartered on them and on the allied states, and Roman marauding excursions extended as far as Palmyra.

When Antony passed on into Egypt trouble at once broke out. The citizens of Aradus rose in revolt against the severity of Roman exactions; outraged Palmyrene merchants, dethroned tyrants, and the remains of the Maccabean family, which Antony had disregarded in favour of Herod and his relatives, urged the Parthians to invade Syria, which was weakly garrisoned. There followed the great inroad of 40-38 B.C. under Pacorus and Labienus, which deprived the Romans of almost the whole province except Tyre, and resulted in the temporary restoration of the Asmonean dynasty at Jerusalem.

The chronicles of this disturbed period, for which we are indebted chiefly to Appian and Josephus, are almost barren of interest; and what strikes one most is the passivity with which the provincials acquiesced in the rule of Pompey or Caesar, Cassius or Antony, Arsacid or Roman. Lacking in cohesion and national feeling, they only sought for a master who could enforce order, and allowed the rival claimants for supreme power in the East to enlist troops and fight out their quarrels in Syrian territory without inclining strongly to either side.

[1] Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 2; App. *B.C.* v. 7.

A succession of legates despatched by Antony at length restored some sort of order. The Parthians, who were mere marauders, and who made no attempt to organize their conquests, were expelled by the quondam mule-driver Ventidius Bassus, and Antigonus, the last Maccabee to wear the Jewish crown, was deposed by C. Sosius (37 B.C.), and replaced by Herod the Great. Much of the country was still, however, in the hands of native rulers, and a considerable part of Phoenicia and Coele-Syria was granted by Antony to his Egyptian lover. He even ventured to inaugurate one of his sons by Cleopatra, Ptolemy, who could claim descent from the Seleucid royal house, as titular sovereign of Syria, and he was arrayed as a Macedonian king and attended by Greek guards.

When, after his victory at Actium and his settlement of Egypt, Octavian made a progress through Palestine and Syria, he was readily welcomed by the provincials, who, after fifty years of almost constant confusion, longed for a stable government.

In 27 B.C., when the provinces were divided between the emperor and senate, Syria, owing to its importance as a frontier district bordering on the only serious rival of Rome, was placed under an imperial legate, always of consular rank. He usually held office from three to five years, and was assisted by a number of senatorial legati, as well as by various procurators, whose duties were primarily financial, but who might be detailed to act as subordinate governors in remoter districts. A strong force of four legions was under the legate's command, distributed among the chief towns, but not at this period to any great extent in frontier garrisons. The office of Syrian legate was regarded as the most honourable that the emperor could confer, just as the governorship of the neighbouring province of Asia was the premier senatorial post.

Under Augustus the number of client principalities was reduced, and the remainder were subject to the supervision of the legate, who readily listened to complaints against the native rulers, and did not hesitate to punish the offender when he thought it desirable. The reason for the retention of these protected states (which in Pliny's time still numbered seventeen) on the outskirts of the Syrian province was that they acted as barriers against barbarian tribes, and made it unnecessary to appoint officials for the collection of revenue or the organization of peoples still largely nomadic. An annual tribute was usually imposed, the king being in fact, and sometimes in name, an imperial procurator. A small Roman force was occasionally maintained, but usually the defence of the frontier was left to the king's mercenaries or the local militia, help being sent from the legions if necessary. The Syrian legate adopted a masterful tone in dealing with these native princes. Josephus[1] describes a gathering of such royalties at Tiberias—the kings of Judaea, Chalcis, Emesa, Pontus, and Armenia—which was summarily dismissed by C. Vibius Marsus (legate A.D. 42-44), who ordered them to return at once to their kingdoms. In serious cases they might be summoned to Rome and punished, like Archelaus of Judaea, who ended his days as an exile in Gaul.

Within certain limits the kings could bequeath their dominions, but apparently only when there were no *agnati* entitled to succeed; and their wills in any case needed the ratification of the Roman government, and might be modified or set aside. Among Semitic peoples the king stood in close relation to the national god, of whom he was the descendant or representative. He often had priestly functions, and it was no doubt politic for the

[1] *Ant.* xix. 8.

Romans to utilize the feeling of religious loyalty thus created, while making the prince entirely dependent on themselves and prepared to show his gratitude by supplying auxiliaries and by magnificent presents to Roman colonies.

The possession of *Commagene*, a mountainous district on the Euphrates, was of importance in the case of Parthian wars, and the capital Samosata, with its strong acropolis overlooking this river, was a position of such strength that when the native dynasty was finally removed in the reign of Vespasian their city became the station of a Roman legion (XVI. Flavia Firma). Numerous Commagenian cohorts, previously maintained by the kings, were henceforth used by the Romans to garrison the Danubian and African frontiers; the cult of their war god and goddess extended into Europe, and Commagenian diviners, who were even suspected of sacrificing children in the practice of their gloomy craft, were known at Rome in Juvenal's day.[1] Two other small kingdoms in the Lebanon district, *Abilene* and *Chalcis*, eventually passed to members of the Herodian family; the former state was incorporated in Syria under Claudius, the latter under Trajan. *Emesa*, with the strong fortress town Arethusa, formed a small principality on the upper Orontes. The Arab chief, Sampsigeramus, who was in possession at the time of the Roman occupation, on agreeing to pay tribute, was confirmed by Pompey, and the kingdom does not seem to ave been finally suppressed till the time of Trajan or Hadrian, the first imperial coins being those of Antoninus Pius. The royal family continued to possess priestly functions; four of its members sat on the imperial throne; and even in the middle of the third century we read[2] of a Sampsigeramus, priest of Emesa, as sallying at the head

[1] vi. 550. [2] Malalas, 296.

of a body of rustic slingers, clad in his sacerdotal robes, to repel a Parthian attack.

The history of Syria in the early empire is much less eventful than in the troublous years which preceded, and prosperity rapidly increased. The passes into Cilicia were guarded, Parthian and Arab inroads ceased. The able Agrippa was for some years at the head of the eastern provinces, and supervised some of the reforms which his legates had to carry out. A few veteran colonies were founded in Syria, and the imperial cult, established at Antioch, formed a centre for provincial gatherings. Many towns were enlarged and beautified, and an accurate census, carried out by P. Quirinius, became the basis for future taxation. One of the legates of the time was M. Tullius Cicero, a son of the orator.[1]

It is true that official extortion was by no means unknown. Varus, who subsequently met with disaster in Germany, governed from 6-4 B.C., and in the epigrammatic phrase of the historian, " (Syriam) pauper divitem ingressus dives pauperem reliquit."[2] In A.D. 17, under Tiberius too, both Syria and Judaea are described as exhausted by their burdens."[3]

The Romans were inclined to estimate the importance of their dependencies by the amount of defence required. The usual force maintained in Syria was relatively large—four legions besides auxiliaries. The names of the legions vary, for exchanges with other provinces occasionally took place. However, the *Leg. vi. Ferrata*, *Leg. iii. Gallica*, and *Leg. iv. Scythica* were associated with Syria for many generations, and though the recruiting for them was by no means limited to their own province, they came to consist largely of natives of the eastern districts. When the *Leg. iii. Gallica* was sent to assist in the establishment

[1] Wilmanns, 1114. [2] Vell. ii. 117. [3] Tac. *Ann.* ii. 42.

of Vespasian in Italy, the men saluted the rising sun, "as the custom of Syrians was."[1]

Syrian tiros frequently served in the West even in the first century, veterans, centurions, and officers, being more liable to be moved about, still later. Thus the *Leg. iii. Augusta*, long stationed at Lambaesis in Numidia, had a large proportion of Syrian veterans from all parts of the province—Apamea, Sidon, Tripolis, Tyre, Damascus, Emesa, and Berytus; and a large number occur in the *Leg. ii. Traiana* at Alexandria.[2] Auxiliaries were raised chiefly in the less civilized parts of north and east Syria, Commagene, Ituraea, or the neighbourhood of Damascus, and were frequently mounted archers.

After Vespasian, Italians no longer served in legions, though they could volunteer for the cavalry or *auxilia*, and the legions thus became thoroughly provincial. Latin, however, remained the ordinary language of the army, and Syrians who returned from service in western provinces show by their inscriptions that they understood it.

In the earlier period camps were chiefly in the vicinity of large towns, as Antioch, Sidon, Berytus, Emesa, etc., and the soldiers were liable to be corrupted by the luxury prevailing there. In fact, discipline and efficiency were so defective that the troops could seldom be trusted to carry on any serious campaign without an addition of legions from Europe. One legion seems to have been stationed in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, where the first Parthian attacks might be expected; and some detachments may have been posted along the eastern frontier when any special danger was apprehended, but otherwise its defence was entrusted in the early empire to native tetrarchs. The garrisoning of Bostra by Trajan

[1] Tac. *Hist.* iii. 24.

[2] C. I. L. viii. 18084. *Eph. Epigr.* v. 206 *seq.*

was followed by the construction of a number of frontier posts, a system greatly developed by Diocletian, under whom a fortified *limes* protected the whole Arabian border. After the revolt in Palestine Hadrian placed there the *Leg. vi. Ferrata*, in addition to the *Leg. x. Fretensis*, which seems to have been left by Vespasian since the first war.

The area under the Syrian legate's control was very extensive, for he was responsible for the safe keeping of the Roman possessions in the whole of Asia. There were no troops in Asia Minor, and his legions might be called on to suppress revolts in Cilicia, as well as to repel Parthians and Arabs. His monarchical position might thus become formidable to the emperor, especially as there was no attempt to play off a civil governor against him as in Africa or Gaul. Gradual subdivisions, however, took place. Cilicia received a separate legate under Nero,[1] Palestine under Vespasian, Arabia under Trajan, and Severus cut up the remainder of Syria, leaving only two legions to the legate of the northern and more important part, with two others in Judaea, one in Arabia, and one in Phoenice.

There are occasional references to fleets on the Euphrates, where a small naval force may have been permanently maintained. This was augmented when it was needed to co-operate with the army in an invasion of Parthia. Thus Ammianus[2] describes Julian's fleet in A.D. 363 as consisting of 1,000 transports and merchant vessels, 500 warships, and a like number designed for making bridges. The *Classis Syriaca* on the Mediterranean coast was important in the early empire, taking the place of the fleets which were hired from Phoenician coast towns in the later days of the Republic. It had the title *Augusta*, and was commanded by a prefect. Its station is unknown, and it may have been distributed among such towns as Laodicea,

[1] Tac *Ann*. xiii. 33; the change became permanent about 73.
[2] Amm. xxiii. 3, 9, and 5, 6.

Berytus, Sidon, and Caesarea. At Seleucia, to judge by inscriptions, there was a detachment of the Misenum fleet from Italy, and the sailors had barracks in the town. This was no doubt charged with the surveillance of Cilician pirates and the conveyance of troops and officials. A Latin inscription[1] of the time of M. Aurelius records the sale of a young Mesopotamian slave, Abbas Eutyches (like many Easterns, he had a double Semitic and Greek name), to a subordinate officer of the trireme *Tiger*, in the praetorian fleet of the Misenates, by a soldier of the same ship, at the winter quarters of the fleet at Seleucia in Pieria. One of the sureties, with the Graeco-Latin name of Julius Antiochus, and probably a Syrian, was a marine on the trireme *Virtue*. Other inscriptions show that a detachment of the Ravenna fleet was also at times stationed in Syria,[2] while in other provinces are records of members of the Syrian fleet on duty in Greece, Egypt, etc. It seems probable that the " fleet of Seleucia," which appears late in the empire,[3] was the same as the Classis Syriaca of the Antonine age; and that the presence of the Misenates at Seleucia was only temporary, perhaps connected with the transport of troops for the Parthian wars.

The reign of Tiberius was marked by the special commission entrusted by the emperor to his nephew Germanicus to regulate the affairs of the East, both of Syria itself, where there had been complaints of excessive taxation, and of adjoining client kingdoms. The events of the last months in the life of that weak but amiable prince, and his suspicious death at Antioch, are described by Tacitus[4] in his vivid yet allusive style, and the degree of Tiberius's guilt will probably never now be known. Important reorganization, both in military and civil affairs, was carried

[1] *Rev. Arch.* 1898, i. 42 *seq.*

[2] C. I. L. iii. 168.

[3] *Bull. C. H.* xxi. 76, *Cod. Theod.* x. 23, 1.

[4] *Ann.* ii. 55.

out by Germanicus in Syria; but Tacitus, with his usual disregard of administrative details, passes it over in almost complete silence, and we only know from an inscription at Palmyra that all taxes except those of trifling amount had henceforth to be paid in Roman instead of local coin.

In two respects Tiberius diverged from the custom of Augustus in the government of Syria, which seems to have been on the whole capably administered. He realized the drawbacks of constant changes, and retained efficient legates for long periods, while at other times he refrained from despatching any governor at all, and divided the administration among the commanders of the four legions.

During the rule of C. Ummidius Quadratus, who held office for a long period under Nero, there took place the first Parthian war since the campaigns of Antony. Since the death of Herod Agrippa (A.D. 44) the Jewish kingdom had been placed under a procurator subordinate to the Syrian legate, who thus had an immense area to administer, and it was resolved to establish a separate military government in the north for the period of the war. Accordingly the able general Domitius Corbulo was ordered (A.D. 55) to command two of the Syrian legions, and act as governor of the territories north of Taurus. Armenia, as usual, was the subject of contention. Tiridates, a Parthian nominee, had secured the throne, and refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of Rome. The Syrian army was found to be enervated through long peace, and ill prepared for the arduous duties of active service in a mountainous region.[1] Even the veterans were ignorant of outpost duties and of the art of fortifying camps. The elegance of their manners suggested that they had seldom been outside the luxurious cities of Syria, and Corbulo, after dismissing the most useless, held fresh levies in Asia Minor and brought over

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 35.

fresh troops from Germany. His tactics proved brilliantly successful; the Armenian capital, Tigranocerta, was captured (A.D. 59), and a Roman nominee was placed on the throne instead of Tigranes. A second victorious campaign, in the course of which a Parthian invasion of Syria was repelled, roused the jealousy of Nero, who recalled Corbulo, and obliged him to commit suicide.

The succeeding years were fully occupied with the Jewish revolt, and with the events which led to the placing of their own nominee on the imperial throne by the Syrian legions. In A.D. 66 the successor of Corbulo in Syria, Cestius Gallus, was severely defeated by the Jewish insurgents, and Nero decided to confer a separate command in Palestine on the veteran general Vespasian, who had served with distinction in Germany and Britain. Collecting a powerful army, and aided by the native princes, he overran northern Palestine, and after fierce fighting the rebellion in the tetrarchies of Agrippa, who made common cause with the Romans, was suppressed. Before he had advanced into Judaea to attack the capital Vespasian found himself called to higher things.

The chaos which followed on Nero's death called for a strong hand. The Syrian army, still showing the results of Corbulo's discipline, which enabled it to avert all fear of Parthian attack and to curb the ferocity of the Jews, was ill satisfied with the upstarts whom the armies of the West were placing on the throne. Mucianus, who had succeeded Gallus as legate of Syria, advised Vespasian to assume the purple, and even the Baal, who was worshipped in an open-air sanctuary on Mount Carmel, encouraged his designs.[1] Mucianus made his preparations at Antioch, Vespasian at Caesarea, his own headquarters. Mucianus administered the oath of allegiance to his own troops at

[1] Tcc. *H.* ii. 78; Suet. *Vesp.* 5.

Antioch, and in the theatre there addressed the citizens in a Greek speech, alleging that Vitellius had proposed to transfer the German legions to the luxurious ease of Syria, and the Syrian to the toils and cold of Germany. The provincials were on intimate terms with the soldiers, often united by ties of marriage, and the camps, owing to the length of time for which they had been occupied, were looked on by the legionaries as ancestral homes. The whole province and the remaining client kingdoms readily embraced Vespasian's cause, and a general council of the party took place at Berytus, attended by officers of both the Syrian and Judaean armies. Levies were held, veterans recalled, towns appointed for forging arms, and the mint of Antioch set in motion. The battle of Bedriacum (A.D. 69) secured the triumph of the Flavian house, and in the following year the capture of Jerusalem restored quiet to the East. Most surviving Jews drifted away to the great towns of northern Syria, and a veteran Roman settlement was planted at Emmaus, near the fallen capital, which was left in such ruins that only a small garrison could be accommodated. A military governor was stationed at Caesarea, and Palestine, apart from temporary arrangements, was definitely separated from Syria.

During the century from 30 B.C. to A.D. 70, of which a brief chronicle has now been given, Syria had recovered itself in a remarkable manner from the depression into which it had been thrown by foreign and civil wars. The period was, on the whole, one of peace, experienced governors were appointed, and trade, both in the products of the Far East and in those of Syria, greatly stimulated. Colonies had been planted, client kingdoms absorbed, the separatist Jewish state broken up, and the position of Syria as perhaps the chief province of the empire received unmistakable attestation from the triumph of Vespasian

and his Eastern legions over Vitellius and the Germans. A generation later the time was felt to have come for the enlargement and consolidation of this great domain. The trade with the Far East had assumed vast dimensions and required further safeguards, while the pacification of central Europe and the internal tranquillity prevailing at Rome made a forward policy in the East again practicable. Thus, in the reign of Trajan, Roman Syria attained its greatest extent and prosperity, and the Parthians were more thoroughly humbled even than by Corbulo.

The first accession of territory resulted from the inclusion in the province of the tetrarchies of Auranitis and neighbouring districts on the death of Agrippa, the last king of the Herodian house, in A.D. 100. It was next the turn of the Nabataean Arabs. Hitherto they had formed a counterpoise to the Jewish tetrarchs, and the wealth which they had accumulated from their extensive trade made it unlikely that they would risk a conflict with the empire. However, by this time many Romans had settled in their domains, and the Arabs perhaps did not show sufficient energy in protecting trade from the nomad tribes which occupied the frontiers of their kingdom. A single campaign (A.D. 104-5), conducted by Trajan's legate Cornelius Palma, sufficed for the overthrow of the last king, and the district was garrisoned and thoroughly organized, numerous roads and aqueducts being laid out.

The present may be a convenient place for a digression on the condition of the Syrian Arabs, who formed a large element of the population, and one which perhaps owed more to Roman rule than did their more civilized neighbours towards the coast.

The Arabs, though they had penetrated into Mesopotamia and many parts of northern and eastern Syria, were chiefly established in the Nabataean kingdom to the south.

east of Palestine and in the group of tetrarchies to the north-east, in which a few fertile areas alternated with barren plains and stony ridges. These latter districts, till the reign of Trajan, though from time to time incorporated in the province, were mostly left to various princes of the Herodian house, which, like the majority of the minor ruling families of Syria, was itself of Arab origin.

The inhabitants of these areas fall into three classes. A settled population, Syrian or Arab, cultivated the rich stretches of agricultural land or vineyard which varied the barrenness of the landscape, or, again, helped in the conveyance of goods from ports on the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to Gaza or other Mediterranean harbours. Less civilized than these were the semi-nomads, living mainly by their herds, who spent part of the year in unwalled villages or huts on the plain, leaving for the fresher mountain pastures during the scorching summer months. Lastly, diminishing in numbers as Western civilization spread, come the Scenite or tent-dwelling Arabs, the ancestors of the modern Bedouins. They might keep a few herds of camel or sheep, and often served in foreign armies or hired themselves out to guard caravans; but they seldom took to agriculture, preferring a roving life, often merely sheltering in caves[1] and pillaging the settled districts.

This roving disposition was turned to good account by the Romans, who recognized their skill both in horsemanship and archery, and raised numbers of auxiliary Arab corps for service in all parts. The Ituraeans, ancestors of the Druses, were among the first to be so employed. They had been subject to the Jewish priest-kings, but as the Asmonean dynasty declined they broke off the yoke, and extended their forays even to the Phoenician coast. They

[1] ἐμφωλεύσαντες, Waddington 2329; *cf.* Strab. xvi. 2, 18, and 20.

were repelled by Pompey, and later were replaced under the rule of Jewish or other native tetrarchs, but even so entered the Roman army in large numbers. Their country lay south of Damascus, towards the Sea of Galilee.

East of this were the parts now known as Haurân, the ancient Auranitis and Trachonitis, at first under Nabataean rule, but transferred by Augustus to Herod, and later to other Jewish princes. This district, especially after the complete annexation under Trajan, which was followed by a great influx of Greeks, Romans, and Aramaeans, attained considerable prosperity, known almost entirely from the architectural remains, which are among the most important in Syria.

It presents a diversified surface—many craggy hills, often with extinct craters, but with much arable soil, capable of producing vines, olives, figs, and other fruits. Masses of black basalt occur in profusion, and this hard stone has had a distinct effect on the style of building, encouraging the use of arches, owing to the difficulty of cutting it into large blocks.

The mountain slopes were also in part cultivated, the hill-sides being banked up in a series of terraces supported by tall stone walls. Woods once clothed the slopes of these hills, and the timber was used for building or charcoal-burning; while the number of presses near the villages shows that vines and olives once abounded on the now sterile crags. The settled population must have been a rich and industrious one, which left no mark in history, but no doubt carried on an active trade with the less settled Arabs beyond, and contributed to the wealth of Syria through the greater part of the period of Roman rule. The number of small but well-built and well-preserved towns which have been described by French and American explorers in the past half-century is remarkable. Here

are town walls and gates, straight streets with colonnades on to which shops opened, beautifully decorated stone houses with stables, streets of tombs, or for richer persons mausoleums with external carvings. All this gives an idea of comfort widely differing from the juxtaposition of gorgeous public buildings and hovels, or blocks of poor and crowded dwellings, which went to make up the great towns of antiquity. Very little restoration would suffice to render many of these deserted towns quite habitable, but the barrenness of the surrounding country could only be overcome at considerable expense.

Passing on to the south and east, we come to the Nabataean country. In the earlier Roman age this included settled communities of no great size, who were till the time of Trajan subject to the king of Petra, and others who lived by keeping flocks and herds, often spent the winter in Arabia, but returned to these parts of Syria in the spring. They spoke the Aramaic language, and some historians hold them to have been in race closer to the inhabitants of north Syria than to those of the Arabian peninsula. Their descendants still feed their flocks on the stubble when the harvest is over, and in summer camp in or near the settled villages, according to the agreement between their sheikh and the villagers. The latter would sell manufactured articles or grain in exchange for the produce of the herds; or sometimes give them, in return for protection against the raids of other nomads.

These easterly parts of Syria, now called the Hamad, were well suited for rearing camels, horses, and sheep. Such sheep were readily sold in Syria, and no doubt supplied much of the wool for the Tyrian dye-works, while camels and horses could be let out for the use of caravans.

The effect of Roman rule was to weaken the hold of these nomads on the settled population. The sheikhs were

indeed often recognized, and entitled stratêgoi, or, if more important, ethnarchs;[1] but the villagers need no longer pay blackmail for protection, but were guarded by lines of forts depending on the *Legio III. Cyrenaica,* whose headquarters were at Bostra, from early in the second century the military centre for East Syria. Many of the nomads who desired to enter the imperial service were stationed in these outposts, just as Germans were settled by the empire on the Gallic side of the Rhine. Thus nomad hordes were induced to embrace an agricultural life; they reared wheat and barley, or in favourable parts the vine, bringing water in canals from the hills, so that the cultivated area extended further in the direction of the desert, the routes towards which were now guarded by forts. Aqueducts, like that constructed at Canatha by Trajan's legate Cornelius Palma,[2] were provided, several towns finely laid out, and Bostra became the centre of a network of roads leading to Damascus, Mesopotamia, and by Philadelphia and Petra to the Red Sea.

The accounts we receive of the Nabataeans are second-hand, and not of much value. By the time Strabo and Josephus wrote, the kingship was in a decadent state, largely controlled by a "mayor of the palace" chosen among the nobles and entitled "the king's brother"; and the king's life and household management were liable to be carefully scrutinized. Few slaves were employed, members of the household doing the work, yet the houses were richly adorned, and banquets were largely attended and graced by the presence of musicians. Strabo emphasizes the importance of Nabataean trade; gold, silver, and perfumes were plentiful in the country, oil of sesame took the place of olive, and there were extensive imports. A constant stream of caravans passed between the port of

[1] Dittenberger, 616-617. [2] *Ibid.* 618.

Leuce Come on the Red Sea and the royal capital of Petra, from which the Mediterranean could be reached. Foreigners, including many Romans, came to settle at this city, causing, as an eyewitness observed, more lawsuits than any natives.

Petra, where the palaces and rock-tombs are still famous, was protected by its rocky position, though the surroundings were fertile, with many gardens. It remained the capital of Roman Arabia till about the time of Severus, when it was superseded by Bostra; but on the division of the province under Diocletian it became the headquarters of the governor of the southern part.

Nabataean towns were seldom fortified, and the warlike spirit of the people had decayed by the Roman age, their chief object being money-making, which was regarded as so important that fines were imposed for undue prodigality.[1]

Under the Romans the chief towns received a municipal organization of the Greek type, with stratêgoi, senate, and assembly. Decaprotoi, officials who, among other duties, supervised the city walls, a matter of great importance in a disturbed region, are mentioned in inscriptions; gymnasiarchs, such as the gymnasiarch Athenio of Gerasa, who several times supplied oil for the city, and helped in raising a temple to Zeus Olympius;[2] and other public officials. The towns, as Bostra, Gerasa, Philadelphia, and Canatha, were enriched with elaborate buildings, such as theatres, temples with propylaea,[3] hippodromes, and colonnaded streets, many of which remain in much better condition than those of western Syria. Bostra, of which the remains have a circuit of nearly five miles, had a great fortress with a theatre in the enclosure (probably for the amusement of the legionaries), baths, triumphal arches, and spacious streets, pointing to a population of quite

[1] Strabo, xvi. 4, 26. [2] Dittenberger, 622.
[3] *Ibid.* 625 (A.D. 150).

100,000 at the best period. In remoter parts, such as Trachonitis, a peculiar system of *metrocomiae* was instituted, villages, in default of towns, becoming the head of a district, and sometimes the station of a garrison.

Throughout the second century Roman influence was exerted to induce nomad tribes to adopt a settled life, while discouraging irregular migrations. Fresh villages sprang up, peopled by veterans or Arabs engaged in transport work, or in supplying the military outposts; and the remainder of the old tribes sank into mere herdsmen.

The territory of Safa, the eastern slope of the Djebel Haurân, north and east of the Nabataeans, was occupied by groups of Arabs, whose remains and inscriptions indicate an interesting stage of development, less civilized than the settled Nabataeans, but already raised by their position on the outskirts of the empire above that of Bedouins. Their language for some centuries continued to be Arabic, with an alphabet derived from the Phoenician, but their deities were those of the settled area, such as Baalsamin and Dusares.

Their country was full of extinct volcanoes, round the craters of which was a very rich soil; corn grew abundantly, and in places there was good pasture. Their activities must be inferred from their monuments, for, considering the intractable character of the stone, they met with some success in figure-work. Mounted lancers appear hunting gazelles, antelopes, or lions; other men guard troops of camels, or, again, there are parties of soldiers armed with bows and shields. They were mainly tent-dwellers, living by hunting, but there are remains of rude stone dwellings, and of heaps of stones on hills which served as defences or for concealment. An outer line of forts protected the Safaite country; the Arabs were placed under an ethnarch, and encouraged to repel the wilder tribes outside, many

of the soldiers who garrisoned the forts being shown by inscriptions to have had Arabic names.

The Safaites became merged in the surrounding population about the fourth century; they built stone villages, took up agriculture and commerce, and probably spoke Aramaic, though their later inscriptions are in bad Greek, a language which seems to have been affected by half-civilized barbarians as a mark of superior culture. Fresh swarms of Arabs constantly arrived, the more easterly, such as the Lakmides of Hira, coming under Persian influence, the Ghassanides, who occupied part of Auranitis, under that of the empire. The Ghassanides professed Christianity, and the emperor Anastasius conferred on their emir the title of king, a sign of the failing power of Rome, which had discountenanced client kingdoms in Syria since the conquests of Trajan. These Arabs were of Himyarite origin, and proved an ineffective barrier to their brethren of the same race, who a century later swept away the whole careful system of frontier defences. These migrations, which had been going on for centuries, had resulted in a great infusion of Arab blood over the whole of eastern Syria, as far as Palmyra and Edessa, so that Trajan, though he annexed little of what ancient and modern geographers design as Arabia, was fully justified in the title that he gave to his new Syrian province.

Two main lines of forts were established about the third century to protect these frontiers, but the names of many are now unknown. They are therefore distinguished by that of the Arabic village which has grown up round them. The more easterly series, which protected the approaches to Damascus, depended on the garrison of Bostra. The northernmost, Djebel Seis, stood south of Palmyra and east of Damascus; others south of this guarded the two principal watercourses of the Safaite district and the rich

corn area of Rouhbé, extending to the east of Bostra. They were mostly square, with angle towers, other towers along the curtain, and sometimes protected by a fosse. The buildings within were attached to the enclosing wall and ranged about a central court. The minor details, especially in the fourth century work, are often elaborate, and illustrate the growth of Oriental influences, which is visible in other parts of Syria at this time.

A more westerly fortified line served to connect Bostra and Petra, running nearly parallel to the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, and depending on the Legio IV. Martia, which garrisoned southern Arabia. The fort of Mechatta, of fourth century date, has some very remarkable ornament, and was apparently designed for a corps in ten sections, being laid out somewhat in the style of a Byzantine palace.

The defence of the eastern *limes* appears to have been as carefully thought out as that of the Danube and Rhine districts, and it continued to perform its task some centuries after the western defences had fallen to the barbarians.

To return to the events of Trajan's reign. An undertaking which made a much greater noise at the time than the formation of Roman Arabia, but one which had few lasting effects, was the bold march of the emperor into the heart of the Parthian dominions. He may have been to some extent influenced by the desire of emulating Alexander by an advance to the farthest limits of the known world, but more tangible motives were also at work. The trade-route by sea from the Persian Gulf was long and dangerous, while caravans bringing the eagerly sought-for products of the Far East into Syria were exposed to attack from the Parthians or Arabs under their protection while passing through Mesopotamia. Discontented Jews were settled

in large numbers throughout these border districts, and were ready to seize any opportunity of assailing the empire. Lastly, the Parthians were intriguing to place a nominee on the Armenian throne, and had previously sought the alliance of Trajan's enemy, the Dacian Decebalus.

Yet the Arsacid monarchy was not really eager for a war with Rome. For 150 years no serious invasion of Syria had taken place, and the feudal constitution of Parthia, with its throng of semi-independent chieftains, stood in the way of any rapid extension. The vassals who supplied the military detachments constantly revolted, and, the army being unpaid and living on booty, victories were seldom adequately followed up. Trajan, however, judging that a bold stroke was necessary to uphold Roman prestige in these parts, refused all compromise, crossed to Syria with some European cavalry, to act with the legions already in the province, and made Antioch his headquarters (A.D. 113). In the course of three brilliant campaigns Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria were overrun and reduced to the position of provinces; the Parthian capital, Ctesiphon, was captured, and the king forced to flee the country. Yet a reaction soon set in; Jewish revolts broke out in most of the eastern provinces, Mesopotamia rose against its Roman garrisons, and Trajan found himself obliged to resign a large part of his recent conquests. Soon after, he died of vexation and fatigue during his retirement through Cilicia.

Hadrian, who was legate of Syria at the time of Trajan's death and his own elevation, prudently resigned the remaining conquests across the Euphrates, which again became the easterly boundary of the empire. He probably felt that the maintenance of armies beyond the river involved great expense, while their generals would be undesirably independent. If Syria and Palestine could not really be assimi-

lated, still less could this be hoped of Armenia and Mesopotamia, where the Greek element was very small; and the energies of the empire could be more profitably expended on reorganizing the older provinces and crushing out the remnants of disaffection. Accordingly Hadrian maintained friendly relations with the Parthian kingdom, repressed the Jews, and greatly developed the resources of the recently formed Arabian province, receiving in inscriptions the title of *Restitutor Arabiae*. The great through route from Damascus to Petra was probably completed at this period, Bostra was visited by Hadrian himself, and forts were established along the northern part, between Bostra and Damascus.

The great Jewish war of Hadrian's time unfortunately found no Josephus to describe it, and the fragmentary accounts in Dion Cassius and late Jewish writers are very obscure; but it has an importance of its own as the only stand made by the Semitic race in Syria against the Roman power from the fall of Jerusalem to the revolt of Zenobia two centuries later. It was not lacking in romance, and was carried on with unexampled determination and fury on both sides. The Jews of Syria had remained in a disturbed state since the outbreaks of Trajan's reign, and Hadrian issued a series of decrees designed, like those of Antiochus Epiphanes, to obliterate their separate nationality. Circumcision was forbidden, with the reading of the Law and observance of the Sabbath; while the establishment of a Roman colony at Jerusalem entailed the perpetual alienation of the sacred soil. Under a leader surnamed Barcochab, or *Son of the Star*, the Palestinian Jews rose against the Roman government. He proclaimed himself the Messiah, won credence by pretended miracles, and displayed considerable military skill.

For some years preparations had been secretly made for a determined guerrilla warfare. Arms had been stored, small towns walled and fortified, caves and subterranean

passages opened; and the malcontents had probably been reinforced by fugitives from the disturbed areas of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Annius Rufus, the governor of Palestine, proved unequal to his task. The Jews, while avoiding pitched battles, succeeded in reoccupying the ruins of Jerusalem, and coined money as an independent community. Indecisive fighting continued in the mountains of Samaria and Idumaea, till Hadrian sent an experienced general, Julius Severus, who was familiar with irregular warfare in Britain. He attacked isolated strongholds, cut off supplies, and gradually reduced the enemy by famine. Jerusalem was recovered and razed to the ground, and the remains of the Hebrew forces were driven into Bither, near Beth-horon. After a long siege this fortress was stormed, Barcochab slain, and Severus received the triumphal insignia (A.D. 135). The Romans now recognized that the peace of Syria could only be secured by unhesitating repression of the rebellious race, which offered so striking a contrast to the peace and civilization of the north. Immense numbers had fallen in the war, thousands were now sold into slavery, all the Rabbis who could be found were put to death, and Jerusalem, under its new name—Aelia Capitolina—received a foreign colony, and the Jews were forbidden to enter on pain of death.

By the time of Antoninus Pius some of the more oppressive measures were annulled. Various schools and synagogues sprang up, exiles returned, and before the end of the century Tiberias became a great Jewish centre, under a patriarch whose position is compared by Origen to that of a client king.

Under M. Aurelius the long-interrupted Parthian wars recommenced, in connection, as usual, with a disputed succession in Armenia. The emperor's colleague, L. Verus, was deputed to take command in the East, but, instead, he spent his time among the amusements of Antioch and

Daphne, abandoned his philosopher's beard, and was constantly seen in the society of actors, jesters, and slaves, a life which gave a ready handle to the wits of the Syrian capital. Fortunately his captains proved able, especially one of Syrian origin, Avidius Cassius, son of a rhetorician of Cyrrus. He effected great reforms in the army, putting Daphne strictly out of bounds for the garrison of Antioch, and enabled the legionaries to meet the Parthians on equal terms, recovering Mesopotamia for the empire. Yet this success was followed by a terrible calamity. The returning army carried with it the seeds of infection, and a deadly plague spread over every province. Legend ascribed it to the opening of a treasure-chest in the temple of Apollo at Seleucia on Tigris, or to the emission of pestilential fumes from some crevice in a shrine of that city.[1] Probably the swamps of Mesopotamia had lowered the resistance of the army, and made them susceptible to any infection. The destruction of nearly half the population of the empire was followed by a distinct decline in civilization, and the resistance to foreign attack during the ensuing century perceptibly weakens.

A few years later, when Verus was dead and Aurelius failing in health, Avidius Cassius, who was still in command in Syria, aspired to the throne. Urged on, it is said, by the faithless empress Faustina, he in A.D. 175 suddenly proclaimed himself at Antioch, declared that Aurelius was dead, and invited the legionaries to support him. His stern discipline had, however, overreached itself; a mutiny ensued, and the usurper was slain. Aurelius at once repaired to the East, and, like many another emperor, came into collision with the satirical Antiochenes, whose spectacles he temporarily suppressed; but on the whole he dealt very mildly with the accomplices of Cassius.

[1] Capit. *Ver.* 8; Amm. xxiii. 6, 24.

If Syria has little external history in the Antonine Age, this was, especially in the earlier part, a period of great material prosperity and tranquillity. Roads and public monuments are numerous, literature and art were highly developed, and Asiatic influences and religions were rapidly extending their sway over the rest of the empire. Already, however, slight signs of decay could be perceived. The army was luxurious and effeminate, composed very largely of Asiatics, and the province was protected from serious invasion more by the weakness of Parthia than by its own strength. Native influences were reviving, and the Romanizing of the province made no further progress. Lastly, the short-lived revolt of Cassius was but the first of a long series of usurpations which a century later almost wrecked the whole imperial system.

CHAPTER III

ANTIOCH

Phoebeae lauri domus Antiochia.—AUSONIUS.

ANTIOCH, for many centuries one of the leading outposts of Greek civilization in the East, stood on both sides, but chiefly to the south, of the River Orontes, on the edge of a fruitful plain about fifteen miles from the Mediterranean. The plain was bounded on the north by Mount Coryphaeus, one of the spurs of the Amanus range, and by other heights, while to the south-west of the city stood the Casian Mount, a short range closing in the lower reaches of the Orontes and extending to the sea. Two heights of this overhung Antioch, their lower slopes, called the district of Epiphania, enclosed by the wall of Antiochus Epiphanes. Of these, one was the Mons Silpius, on which stood the Capitol, with its temple of Zeus, and which had a theatre cut on its outer face. The other, the original seat of a small settlement called Iopolis, was separated from Silpius by a steep ravine, through which the torrent Parmenius ran to join the Orontes; and on it rested the Acropolis of Antioch, with the wall of Epiphanes running behind. On the west, between these hills and the river, a road led to the finely placed suburb of Daphne, five miles off, through an area covered with villas, gardens, groves, baths, and houses of rest and refreshment.

The Orontes, which, after its long northerly course from

Lebanon, made a sharp bend to the south-west before reaching Antioch, was 120 feet wide in the city, having on its left bank the older portions, due to Seleucus Nicator; and here the main street, with beautiful porticoes, ran parallel to its course. At one point the stream parted, and enclosed a pear-shaped island, joined to the mainland by five bridges, and containing the new city of Seleucus Callinicus, with the Palace, afterwards occupied by the Roman governor, and at the centre the fine building known as the Tetrapyle. Near the west end of the island a bridge led to the main road to Seleucia, a sister foundation of Seleucus Nicator, lying a short distance north of the mouth of the Orontes.

Seleucia, situated on the edge of a plain called by the Macedonians Pieria, was the station of a Roman naval detachment, and the outlet for much of the produce of northern Syria and the countries behind. The town consisted of an upper and lower quarter, the latter with harbour and warehouses, the former strongly situated on precipitous rocks beneath Mount Coryphaeus, with steep streets and high walls, but several fine temples and public buildings. The harbour was not altogether a satisfactory one, considering that it was the usual landing-place for Roman armies brought from Europe for the Parthian wars. The government spent much on improving it, and, probably in the Flavian era, employed soldiers and sailors to dig a huge trench to divert a torrent which threatened to silt it up. An inscription to Vespasian and Titus stands above, and at one end, probably in consideration of a bridge having been thrown across it, the Antonini are commemorated.[1] Under Diocletian a number of soldiers were employed to deepen the harbour, but the work was only completed in the time of Constantius after some serious

[1] *Rev. Arch.* 1898, i. 42.

disorders. A series of terraces gave access to the upper town from the shore.[1]

Important routes from the Euphrates and the interior of Asia, as well as from Apamea and central Syria, converged on the east of Antioch, and, although its own industries were not important, it was well supplied with all kinds of produce both by land and sea. The sea was less than a day's sail by the Orontes, and by a canal specially cut by the Romans to avoid a bend in the river where the currents were rapid.[2]

The population settled in Antioch on its foundation in 300 B.C. was partly Macedonian, partly Greek. Though the lower classes were gradually recruited from native Syrians, who also occupied most of the neighbouring villages, which retained their original names, the civilization was throughout Greek and not Semitic.

Much of the neighbouring country was covered with market gardens, many owned by the richer inhabitants of Antioch, who worked them by means of slaves and sold the produce in the city. Farther off were extensive villas, under the empire approximating to the character of Latifundia, or wide slave-worked estates. These developed into regular colonies of cottages clustering round the principal house, with their own market, baths, and in the Christian era occasionally a church with resident priest.[3] Such estates could provide artisans, bond or free, for nearly all necessary work, and seem to have been not unlike mediaeval villages. The slopes above the city were used, where practicable, for vineyards and other plantations; the steeper declivities were cut into terraces on which opened rows of rock-cut tombs, or other caves, such as those occupied in the fourth century by the anchorites, whom

[1] Polyb. v. 57.

[2] Paus. vii. 29.

[3] Chrys. *Hom. Act.* 18.

the luxury of this city of pleasure induced to seek a life of solitary meditation and asceticism.

About few towns of the size and importance is so little evidence to be gained from archaeological sources. Inscriptions, thanks to the ravages of sieges and earthquakes, are almost non-existent. The ruins include part of a Byzantine wall, some foundations of late churches, portions of an aqueduct, and a few smaller objects. Thus there is a statue of a philosopher or orator in white marble, entitled without any authority Libanius, and some sarcophagi, one carved with relief figure of an athlete holding a palm. Literary information is, on the contrary, fairly plentiful, but chiefly in the period of the later empire. In earlier times Romans seldom took long journeys for amusement or study, and the officials and merchants who visited Syria were not the men to record their impressions. Natives, too, with any literary ability mostly sought their fortunes elsewhere. We are therefore left to casual references, chiefly connected with the stay of Roman generals at Antioch before or after the eastern wars, for which it was the natural base. In this way Pompey, Caesar, Antony, Trajan, Hadrian, Severus, and many others, were brought here; and Roman troops were constantly kept stationed in the neighbourhood, where they had their own Campus Martius, but inevitably found their discipline and vigour deteriorate in these relaxing surroundings.

From about the time of Constantine Antioch comes in for frequent mention, especially as the scene of several councils convened to settle the doctrinal disputes of the time. In the later half of the fourth century a distinguished group of writers, all more or less closely connected with the city, do much to illustrate its life and manners: Theodoret, the church historian, Libanius, Ammianus Marcellinus, Joannes Chrysostom, and the emperor Julian.

Of the time of Justinian there is a vivid narrative by Procopius of the destruction of Antioch by the Persians, and the rebuilding carried out by the emperor's orders.

The chief authority has not yet been mentioned, an ecclesiastical writer a generation later than Procopius, Joannes Malalas (the Syriac name for "orator"). His history is one of the most curious works of antiquity, and presents several problems by no means satisfactorily settled. The Greek is of that barbarous kind which becomes increasingly common with Byzantine chroniclers, and his knowledge of general history is often childish. Yet Malalas had access to local records of Antioch, some apparently embodied in a lost work of Domninus about Justinian's time; and he was sufficiently acquainted with popular tradition to give much curious lore about the city, and to a less degree about other towns of Syria. Malalas is also interesting as one of the first Greek writers to show what may be called the mediaeval attitude towards history, which puts mere folklore on a level with admitted facts, and intersperses dry chronicles with unlikely miracles. We hear how virgins were slaughtered by Seleucid kings or Roman emperors to consecrate their new foundations, and statues of the victim set up to commemorate the event; how Seleucus followed an eagle which had snatched his offering from the altar, and on the site of the future city of Laodicea killed a wild boar, and dragged it round the proposed area; how to still a pestilence a diviner recommended the cutting of a stone mask of Charon wreathed, on a cliff overlooking the city. Again, under Tiberius the magistrates set up in honour of the emperor in the centre of the town a bronze statue having a mystic eye engraved on it, and attached to it a stone box filled with charms capable of checking the flow of the torrent Parmenius. About Nero's time the famous magician Apollonius of

Tyana was called in to provide remedies for various evils. He set up a talisman against northerly winds by the side of one of the gates; another, to keep off scorpions, consisted of a bronze scorpion with a small column over it; while to check the ravages of mosquitoes he made an addition to the ordinary ceremonies at the horse-races, by which mounted men carried on reeds a leaden figure of Ares with a shield hanging, and a small sword attached, at the same time crying: "No gnats in the city." A column set up after an earthquake had a statue on the top, with the inscription, "Unshaken, never falling," but, unfortunately, it was struck by lightning, and earthquakes continued common. At a later date a Christian governor, Plutarchus, discovered a bronze image of Poseidon which had the same properties, and to avoid impiety had it fused into a statue of Constantine and set up outside the praetorium.

Many of these traditions may be historical, though no reliance can be placed on Malalas's dates, and some have a certain amount of external support. A large eye within a square, cut in the face of the rock, and evidently having some magical object, was found adjoining the Roman cutting at Seleucia;[1] and what may be the identical Charoneion of Malalas is known, carved on a rocky wall abutting on a small terrace to the south of Antioch. It is a colossal beardless face, over eleven feet high, in some kind of headdress, with a standing figure close by, on a much smaller scale, resting on a staff.[2] The head, doubtless of Roman date, is probably that of a female, perhaps one of the native goddesses, with a paredros standing by her. Charon is never represented as beardless, but a late Christian writer might naturally identify an unknown deity with one of the best remembered figures of the old pantheon. As

[1] C. I. L. iii. 6702.

[2] *Bull. C. H.* xxi. 72.

to the scorpion charm, a similar curiosity was till recently shown at Homs (Emesa), a charmed stone mentioned by old Arab geographers, and widely reputed among the natives as capable of preserving those who touched it from the attack of scorpions ; while clay laid on it could heal a wound inflicted by them. It is really a Roman sarcophagus, adorned with a large disk which has garlands draped on each side, so as to bear a slight resemblance to a scorpion's body and claws.

As the city and neighbourhood were poor in legend, and even the neighbouring Macedonian town of Antigonia, the inhabitants of which, including a number of Athenians, were transported to Antioch, was of quite recent foundation, the Greeks, who had an instinctive dislike for a place with no history, invented or transferred a considerable body of myth. Triptolemus, of Eleusis in Attica, had been sent by Inachus with a party of Argives in search of Io, with orders not to return without her. Having continued their vain search as far as Syria, they decided to settle, and built a town, Ione or Iopolis, on the slopes of Silpius, with a temple of Zeus. These were subsequently joined by Cretans under Casus, whose settlement was recalled by the name of the Casian Mount, with its oracle of Zeus, and by a temple called Minoon. Cypriots, Eleans, and members of the clan of Heracleidae had also been added, in proof of whose arrival might be shown the western suburb Heraclea. The Argive settlement of Iopolis was visited by Perseus, on whose prayer a serious flood of the Orontes was stopped by a miraculous ball of fire from heaven.[1] Orestes was freed from his madness in sleep on Mount Melantius, by Antioch, and washed away his guilt

[1] *Cf.* Strab. xvi. 2, 5; Liban. xi. 45 *seq.*; and Malalas. The Casian Mount was looked on as the scene of the conflict between Zeus and Typhon (Apollod. i. 3).

in the river. The Io legend seems to have been strongly impressed, and may have been due to the presence of Isiac rites in some of the suburbs, recalling the Egyptian Io. For some reason now unknown the Syrians of Antioch annually made a tour of the city, striking at the door of the Greeks and crying out: "May the soul of Io be saved." The tradition of mixed Argive and Attic ancestry resulting from the incorporation of the inhabitants of Iopolis (which remained as the citadel of Antioch, as it still was in the time of the Crusaders), and of Antigonia, was long treasured. The Athenian emblems of Athena and the owl appear on some coins of Antioch, and when the empress Eudocia, daughter of an Athenian sophist, Leontius, visited Antioch, she caused a great outburst of enthusiasm by quoting in an address to the citizens the Homeric line: "Of your race and your blood I claim to be."

The usual view is that all this fabric rests merely on the presence of Greek settlements made under the Macedonian kings, aided by some accidental resemblances of place-names. Too little is known of the state of northern Syria under Persian rule to exclude the possibility of any earlier Greek colonization, but towns of any importance are not likely to have been first mentioned by writers of the empire.

In the Seleucid age Antioch was primarily a settlement of Macedonian soldiers, and this fact was reflected in the nomenclature of the district—Pieria, Bottia, Axius (another name of the Orontes), and Pella (or Apamea); but Greeks also joined in considerable numbers, especially from Crete, Cyprus, and, after the unsuccessful close of the Syro-Aetolian war, from Aetolia and Euboea.

Roman usage began to be adopted as early as the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), who had spent many years in Rome as a hostage. He himself wore a white toga, and walked about Antioch as if canvassing for office. He

sat on a *sella curulis* to administer justice, armed a legion of 5,000 men in the Roman fashion, and began a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the Silpian hill,[1] and first familiarized the citizens with gladiatorial shows. After his death Syria sank almost to the position of a client state. Thus Lysias, the guardian of the child king Antiochus Eupator (163 B.C.), was compelled by special emissaries to reduce the military establishment in accordance with the treaty of 189 B.C. After the escape from Rome and victory of Demetrius Soter, the influence of Rome at Antioch waned. The corrupt senate of the day allowed much of the foreign policy of the state to pass out of their hands, readily selling decrees to those who asked for them. Antioch, like other Syrian towns, gained more and more independence as the Seleucid monarchy declined. At times it was the capital of a separate state under some member of the royal house, but towards the end of the period tended to the position of a Greek city-state, governed by its own senate and archons. For a few years it fell under the dominion of the Armenian king Tigranes, and was itself one of his residences, an experience of barbarian rule which caused the citizens to welcome formal annexation by Rome. Q. Marcius Rex, who held a command in Cilicia in 68 B.C., seems to have been the first officer to enter into negotiations on the subject, and he presented the citizens with a circus and palace.[2] The Antiochenes, annoyed at the never-ending dissensions of the Seleucid family, which gave excuses for Arab chieftains to interfere with Syrian politics, and, as Cicero implies, had impaired the prosperity of the city,[3] readily accepted incorporation in the Roman dominions (64 B.C.). By making a present to Pompey, they secured the retention of their municipal constitution, and though the proconsul henceforth made Antioch his headquarters,

[1] Liv. xli. 20; Polyb. xxvi. 10.

[2] Malalas, 224.

[3] *Pro Arch.* iii. 4.

the local authorities were not subject to him. It is doubtful whether any tribute was payable, the only evidence being the fact that when colonial rights were at last granted to Antioch in the time of Caracalla, a clause was inserted that the tribute should remain unchanged.[1] Probably it was imposed about the time of the Augustan census.

Pompey was for a time very popular at Antioch. He restored the hostages that the Antiochenes had been compelled to give, and rebuilt the senate-house, a work of Antiochus Epiphanes, then in ruins, but later adorned with porticoes and paintings. It adjoined the forum, which lay between the principal street and the Silpian Mount, and was again rebuilt after a fire under Tiberius. Charmed with the beauties of the groves and streams, he extended the area of the Daphne shrine and grounds,[2] and as a reward for its gallant resistance to Tigranes, granted freedom to the port of Seleucia.

One of Pompey's freedmen, Demetrius, a native of Gadara, in whose honour he caused that town to be rebuilt, appears from a story in Plutarch to have been in high favour at Antioch. During his tour in Asia, Cato the younger, arriving at the outskirts of the city, found drawn up a number of priests and magistrates in wreaths and white robes, besides youths and boys in festal attire. He supposed that they intended to do honour to himself, but on alighting was merely asked how soon Demetrius might be expected. Yet a few years later both the citizens and a number of Roman merchants, who apparently already formed a sort of corporation, absolutely refused to admit Pompey, a fugitive after the fatal day of Pharsalus, within their walls, and garrisoned the citadel against him.[3]

Caesar, after his narrow escape at Alexandria, spent a

[1] Paul. *Dig.* 50, 15, 8. [2] Eutrop. vi. 14; Malal. 211.
[3] Caes. *B. C.* iii. 102.

short time in Syria, and confirmed the liberty of Antioch, which adopted an era dating from his great victory (48 B.C.). He gave orders here for various buildings, an apsidal basilica called Caesareum near the stream Parmenius, containing a statue of Rome in the apse, and one of himself in the open space at the centre, and several edifices on or adjoining the Acropolis Mount. One of these was the first amphitheatre which the city possessed. He also presented baths supplied by a special aqueduct which, like the amphitheatre, survived till the time of Theodosius.

Augustus, accompanied by Agrippa, visited the city in the year after his victory at Actium, and during his long command in the East Agrippa added several architectural monuments. He rebuilt the circus of Marcius Rex, raised the height of the theatre, and erected public baths to the south-east of the city, a quarter hitherto left vacant, which received the name of Vicus Agrippae. About the same time Herod the Great, following the policy habitual to his house of conciliating the favour of Rome by the splendour of his buildings in provincial towns, prolonged the city eastwards by continuing the splendid colonnaded street of Epiphanes for twenty stades, with porticoes and white marble pavement. This seems to have reached to the Orontes before its great westward bend, over a marshy area which was thereby protected from floods.[1]

Few particulars are preserved about the internal constitution of Antioch under the empire. Though no Roman colony was formally settled, it contained a number of Roman business men and contractors, civil servants attached to the governor's staff, officers, soldiers, etc.; and the constitution, while essentially Greek, had some Roman features. Two archons or duoviri stood at the head, directing the public spectacles and other liturgies. The

[1] Jos. *B. J.* i. 21, 11.

senate, members of which wore the toga, was at first large and elective, according to the Greek model; but as the empire advanced its burdens became heavier, and it sank from 1,200 to 60, or even less, in the fourth century. It controlled the land owned by the municipality, which was largely held by rich possessors, some plots being granted to poor citizens by way of relief. It was responsible for preserving public order, but little is known of the means at its disposal, and the duty was inadequately performed. It sent embassies to the emperor or other dignitaries, directed the supply of provisions, the heating of the baths, and co-operated with the magistrates in the management of the games. Senators were expected to receive and escort away the governor of Syria, to whom they paid a New Year's visit. In the earlier period they were probably elected from among all citizens who possessed a fairly high census, and these would be chiefly the heads of the old families.

Under them stood the general body of citizens, distributed among eighteen tribes, probably local divisions, having certain subordinate districts (γειτονίαι). Each tribe had separate public baths, and sent boxers to take part in the festival of Artemis held in the eastern suburb of Meroe. The presidents of the tribes had some slight powers, such as that of holding a preliminary inquiry in case of disorders, and of setting up statues of distinguished persons. The people met in assembly in the theatre to pass decrees,[1] but their meetings were of no real importance.

A festival for the Syrian province was held here, with games, in connection with the worship of the emperor. The president was a Syriarch, who, however, does not appear before the second century, and in the fifth his office was combined with that of governor of Syria.

[1] Tac. *Hist.* ii. 80.

The mint of Antioch was one of the most active in the eastern provinces under the early empire, and the *monetarii*, or slaves employed there, formed a large class. Two parallel issues of coins were current in the Seleucid age—the royal, following the Attic weight, and the municipal, following the lighter Tyrian standard. Pompey ordered the Attic standard to be generally adopted, but this does not seem to have been strictly observed, and the Antiochene tetradrachms usually only passed for three Roman denarii. These tetradrachms were very abundant throughout the east in the Augustan period, and one of them was probably the *stater* miraculously found by St. Peter, as described in the gospel.[1] During the subsequent reigns as far as Nero they are lacking, but the mint of the neighbouring Seleucia was then active. They are then resumed, but cease again between Hadrian and Pertinax, Hadrian apparently having shown his displeasure by suppressing the silver coinage. All the privileges of Antioch were restored by Severus, after whom the tetradrachms continue to Gallienus, ultimately degenerating into billon pieces of variable weight.

No gold could be issued in the provinces, and the bronze falls into two classes—municipal, with the name of the town and the date in Greek, calculated from the local era; and imperial, without the name of the town, but having the letters S.C.,[2] like Roman bronze, and exactly resembling the design of the first class. From the time of Vespasian the classes were closely assimilated, with Latin legends, which were, however, replaced by Greek under Trajan.

A great number of designs are used. On the obverse we often find the head of Zeus, Artemis, or a personification of the city, with reverse designs of Apollo, Zeus Nicephorus

[1] Matt. xvii. 27.

[2] These letters, though rare on provincial issues, also occur at Damascus and Philippopolis.

seated, or a tripod. These belong to the age of the Republic, and have no reference to Roman rule. Under the empire there is usually the head of the emperor or the figure of the city, on the reverse sometimes the name of the governor of Syria, and one of a number of designs. One is a ram (Aries), and star within a crescent, recalling the legend that it was in spring that Seleucus witnessed the omen which determined the site of the future capital. Another is the Fortune of Antioch, wearing a mural crown, seated on a rock which represents Mount Silpius, with the river-god Orontes swimming at her feet. This was an imitation of a local statue by Eutychides of Sicyon, a pupil of Lysippus, a copy of which exists at the Vatican. It was of bronze gilt, and stood within a shrine of four Ionic columns open at the sides, a design adopted in several Syrian towns, as Gerasa and Palmyra. Many epithets are given to the city on the coinage—" autonomous," " sacred and inviolate metropolis," or, after the grant of colonial rights early in the third century, " metrocolonia."

Antioch developed greatly in the period of peace inaugurated by Augustus. Wealth increased, and in the fourth century Chrysostom estimates the rich as forming a tenth of the population, the very poor numbering no more. The abundance of temples, baths, porticoes, aqueducts, and other public monuments erected during the first two centuries is extraordinary; but in some cases, in view of the frequency of earthquakes, they were doubtless only reconstructions on Seleucid foundations.

Antioch, like Alexandria, played a prominent part in the elevation of the Flavian dynasty, and here Titus arrived in triumph after his conquest of the Jews, and set up by a gate, probably the western, figures of the Cherubim which he had brought from Jerusalem.

Trajan made Antioch his headquarters during the series

of Parthian campaigns which closed his life. To the god of Mons Casius he dedicated some of the spoils of Dacia, two finely worked silver cups, and the horn of a wild ox set in gold; a poetical dedication was supplied by Hadrian.[1] He also completed the theatre beneath the Acropolis.

While wintering at Antioch in A.D. 115, after the conquest of Mesopotamia, Trajan narrowly escaped destruction in one of the most violent earthquakes on record, in which the Casian Mount threatened to overwhelm the whole city. Later ages attributed his preservation to his having been lifted from a window of the palace by some supernatural power, and placed in the middle of the circus.

Hadrian, who was already legate of Syria, received in the palace the news of his succession to the empire, and spent the first months of his reign at Antioch. Returning some years later, he sought to curb the licence of the legions stationed here, a licence which was yet more unrestrained a generation later. The soldiers would wander about the city from noon onwards, they were constantly at the theatres, among the pleasures of Daphne, or in the various taverns and refreshment-houses of the city. They were given to gaming and late hours, neglected their horses, and could scarcely bear the weight of their armour.[2] It is not surprising that the government at length felt obliged to leave Antioch altogether ungarrisoned.[3]

Hadrian presented several buildings to Antioch, and a theatre to Daphne, but, like other emperors, failed to win the affections of the townspeople. Naturally turbulent, and gifted with a keen and satirical wit, they never forgot that Antioch had once been a royal city. Not only did they treat the Roman emperors who came to stay among

[1] *Anth. Pal.* vi. 332; Suid. *Κάσιον ὄρος.*

[2] Fronto (ed. Naber), pp. 128, 206; Vulcat. Gall. *Avid. Cass.* 5.

[3] Procop. *B. Pers.* i. 17.

them as foreign masters rather than honoured heads of the state, but they gave zealous support to any usurpers who presented themselves in Syria. While Hadrian was no doubt annoyed at their witticisms, it is unlikely that, as the historians suggest, he seriously contemplated the subdivision of Syria, however desirable for military reasons, simply to lessen the metropolitan dignity of Antioch.

The events of Julian's stay in the capital and the circumstances of the production of his *Misopogon* are so characteristic of the place that they deserve inclusion in any description of Antioch. In A.D. 362, when the city was already predominantly Christian, he fixed his headquarters here, and remained nearly a year to refresh the troops which he had brought from Europe and revive the discipline of the Syrian legions before entering on the Persian campaign. Naturally of a visionary disposition, with an instinctive respect for everything that was old, he had been disgusted by the sectarian disputes of the Christians by whom he was surrounded, and chose to regard their beliefs as mere atheism. Himself a vaguely pantheistic Neoplatonist, he regarded all heathen cults as participating in the truth, that of the sun perhaps ranking highest, but even Judaism not being outside the pale. In morals he was strict and ascetic, but inclined to pedantic interference, calculated to breed opposition and ill-will. His strength and influence were insufficient for a general persecution, but he encouraged local outbreaks against Christians, tried to close their churches, and violated martyrs' shrines.[1]

That such a prince would come into conflict with the proud and luxurious population of Antioch could be foreseen. He took unwise measures to meet a scarcity of provisions which occurred, stopped the spectacles, had water in which heathen sacrifices had been prepared

[1] Soz. v. 3, 9, 10.

sprinkled over the food in the market-place, and similarly defiled the public fountains. He removed from the church at Daphne the bones of the venerated martyr Babylas to a distant site, and cruelly punished two imperial guards who expressed disapproval.[1] After this a suspicious fire destroyed the temple of Apollo, and the citizens revenged themselves for the various annoyances by bitter lampoons on the emperor, his opinions, personality, even his philosopher's beard; for the Antiochenes wore no beards even when old.

Julian retaliated by the famous satire *Misopogon*, which he exhibited in a public place at Antioch, and which, though undignified and one-sided, gives a valuable picture of the manners of his age. He attributes his unpopularity, in the first place, to his neglect of the elegances of society, his long rough hair and inky fingers, and his avoidance of theatres except at the great heathen festivals, when the citizens were most inclined to stay away. He had even suppressed all such performances as well as public dances for some months, in contrast to the local magistrates, whose chief claim to favour rested on their profusion in providing shows. The shrine of Daphne he had found neglected, deserted by Apollo even before the fire; and in spite of the great expenses incurred for the *Maiuma* and private feasts, the city would not make a single offering at the shrine of Phoebus.

In the matter of provisions, he had by restricting prices incurred the dislike of the tradesmen, as well as of the landowners, from whom the supplies ultimately came; that of the common people by limiting the foods to what he considered necessaries—bread, wine, oil, and meat. Fish and poultry he excluded, as they would be in a Platonic republic. Julian again recalls that visionary state in the

[1] Theodoret, iii. 10.

sarcastic account of the absolute freedom claimed by the Antiochenes, which closely corresponded to the licence of the ill-regulated democracy in Plato's eighth book. Wheeled vehicles, as we learn elsewhere,[1] were seldom seen within the city, but asses and camels were driven by slaves through the colonnades instead of keeping to the open road; young men roistered about the streets; parents were afraid to exert authority over their children. Further, he maintained that the complaints of oppression were groundless; Julian had remitted imports, reduced taxation, brought corn from Chalcis, Hierapolis, even Egypt, to relieve the dearth, and won the approval of neighbouring cities. He also extended the senatorial dignity to the descendants of Antiochene senators even through daughters.[2]

The news of the tyrant's death in the subsequent campaign was received with frantic rejoicings at Antioch.[3] Public gatherings and banquets took place, services of thanksgiving were held, and the victory of the Cross was proclaimed in the theatre. Yet his successor Jovian, a believer, was not well received on his bringing back the defeated army.[4] He was ridiculed for his surrender of Mesopotamia, and for a time it was feared that the Syrian capital itself might be given up to the Persians. Homeric tags and biblical quotations were called in to deride Jovian's tall form and mean abilities. "Evil Paris, excellent in figure alone"; "Thou hast returned from war, and would that thou hadst perished there"; "What length and depth of foolishness." Before long Jovian found it desirable to leave for Europe.

To this fourth-century period belong most of the surviving references to life and manners at Antioch. Christianity had come in early; St. Peter was claimed as the

[1] Vopisc. *Vit. Aurel.*

[2] Zos. iii. 11.

[3] Theodoret, iv. 22.

[4] *Cf.* Fr. H. G. iv. 607.

first bishop; a successor, Ignatius, was martyred under Trajan. By the time of Constantine Christians were in a majority, and doctrinal disputes were subjects of universal interest. The Arian heresy in particular received strong support from the Church of Antioch, whose errors in this respect are duly censured by the Articles of the Church of England. A double succession of bishops existed, and the sect won such a following as seriously to impair the authority of the patriarchal see, until the strong personality and practical eloquence of Chrysostom for the time reunited all parties.

The mere fact that Christians were now in a majority implied a certain relaxation in their manners since the change from the position of a persecuted sect to that of co-religionists of the emperor. We must not take the denunciations of Chrysostom against what was admittedly one of the most luxurious communities in the empire as at all representing the average eastern Christian of the fourth century.

The public buildings and streets were laid out in that regular fashion, disregarding obstacles presented by the lie of the ground, which is associated with Hippodamus, the designer of Rhodes and the Piraeus. Within the city houses stood in continuous blocks, in the main streets opening directly on the colonnaded sidewalks, which were protected by roofs from rain or heat, and gave ready access from one house to another. Even in the side streets passers-by could shelter under the lattice-work projecting from the walls. Every quarter was complete in itself, with baths and other public buildings, while the chief places of amusement could readily be reached from the central stoae. In the evening streets were brightly lighted with public and private lamps, especially about the entrances to the baths, so that work or amusement could be

extended far into the night. Baths specially designed for use in summer stood in high airy positions, some of them raised on pillars; others were sheltered from keen winds, a few being supplied from natural hot springs. The central houses were large and fine, each with its own water-supply, from three to five stories high, often with flat roofs for sleeping on. Many of the poorer inhabitants were forced away to the outskirts, especially to the north beyond the river, a part formerly used as a Campus Martius, or beyond the west gate. The growth of population in the latter quarter induced the emperor Theodosius to extend the wall and add a considerable strip to the city. The population, as given by Chrysostom, was 200,000, but this is probably exclusive of slaves and children; and, considering the great area covered, the total number in the fourth century can hardly have been less than 400,000. Many had no settled employment, but lived on charity dispensed by the church or took subordinate parts in the various public entertainments. Thieves were numerous, haunting churches, baths, or other places of public resort. The slave population, too, was large, and all this provided much inflammable material, ready to break out into insurrection on slight provocation, and yet so irresponsible that punishment for their misdeeds was liable to fall on the senate and better class of citizens.

Gladiatorial shows were never specially popular in the Greek east, and now seem to have been falling into disuse; and the two chief amusements, apart from occasional festivals, were the games in the circus and the theatre. The chariot-races, with their faction colours, roused as much excitement as at Rome or Constantinople. Senators and magistrates were put to heavy expense in maintaining the races, and sent for horses from far and wide, even from Spain.[1] Several other towns in Syria also had a circus,

[1] Symm. *Ep.* iv. 62.

as Berytus, Tyre, Caesarea, and Laodicea, which last produced some of the most famous drivers in the empire.[1] At Antioch the circus lay across the river, near the Porta Taurina; its façade was adorned with towers, and it was occasionally used for *venationes*, or combats with wild beasts. When an important race was to be run the churches emptied; spectators not only filled the seats, but mounted neighbouring roofs or hills, sometimes collecting from the night before; old and young, sick and whole, would stand in heat or cold for entire days with bare heads.[2] The tradition of the Church was to condemn all spectacles, and the preacher justifies his opposition to these races by the amount of bad company which assembled, the profane language and violent disputes, and the evil influence which such hero-worship exercised on the performers. They and their exploits, or the pedigrees of their horses, were the universal subjects of conversation, to the neglect of workshops and businesses. Drivers, mimes, and other entertainers were arrogant and profligate, the chosen companions of the rich, and themselves attended by crowds of parasites, often strangers to the place. Mimes kept up a regular household. When out riding they were preceded by servants, and all such performers were in a position to support a *claque* to lead the applause, a fruitful source of disorders.

The theatre is condemned in still stronger terms, and from what is known of theatrical performances in other parts it is to be feared that any literary or artistic merit had vanished from this once potent instrument of Greek civilization. Dancing and pantomime were the chief attractions, usually accompanied by flutes and other

[1] *Expositio*, 32; *cf*. Symm. *Ep*. 63.

[2] Chrys. *Contr. Anom*. vii. 1; *De Anna*, iv.; *Hom. Matt*. vi.; *Hom. Genes*. ii. 1.

instruments. The performers would act some short love-scene or mythological incident, or, again, bring on a kind of harlequinade, in which a *stupidus* was loaded with mockery or blows. Chrysostom constantly denounces the scanty costume and painted faces of the actresses, the effeminate gestures of the male actors, who often reverted to the old Attic use of wearing female masks, and the general inanity of the performances. Acrobats would twist themselves into wheels, swimmers exhibited on a flooded stage, other mountebanks threw knives into the air, balanced poles on their foreheads, or danced on ropes.[1]

Women of the better classes do not seem to have been present at these shows, but Chrysostom does not spare their idleness and extravagance. They were cruel to their slaves, as in Juvenal's day; they were so indolent that they would not walk the length of the street to church, but had to be carried on mules; they wore multicoloured robes, pearls, and gold ornaments, putting their husbands to unreasonable expense, and giving rise to envyings and neglect of the poor. Widows, instead of setting an example of sobriety, frequented the market-place, gossiping or abusing one another.

The richer houses had elaborate porticoes, the capitals of the columns gilt, or the whole column encased in gold-leaf; statues, frescoes, and mosaics of mythological subjects were numerous; even the walls of bedrooms were overlaid with marble or gilt metal; golden jars and pots, silver dishes, chairs, and footstools abounded.[3] Many men wore silken robes and were attended by crowds of slaves.[4] Banquets and revellings lasted till midnight, and it was a common boast that half the day or a large part of the

[1] *Ad Pop. Ant.* xix.

[2] *De Sacerd.* iii. 17; *Isai.* iii.; *De Virg.* 62; *Hom. Matt.* vii.

[3] *Hom. Coloss.* vii; *Psalm* 113. [4] *Laz.* i. 12.

night had been spent in feasting with buffoons and parasites. Cooks, pastry-cooks, and carvers were necessary members of the household, and there were elaborate rules as to the sequence of courses. Some recommended serving first birds grilled on the coals and stuffed with fish, the proper beginning of a banquet being a favourite subject of debate.[1]

The poorer classes were oppressed; artisans had to borrow in order to keep their tools, and themselves resorted to lies and perjury in their buying and selling. Nor are the neighbouring landowners passed over. Whether the season was good or not, they made equal demands on their tenant serfs, who had to work all the winter, harassed by bailiffs, and frequently to satisfy their masters had to run into debt at exorbitant rates, such as 50 per cent., an interest forbidden even by heathen laws.[2] It was their labour which enabled many branches of trade to be carried on, and filled threshing-floors and wine-presses; and in spite of this they might not take any of the produce home, but were merely paid a small sum for it. Side by side with these industrious classes was the all-powerful mob,[3] which had to be constantly flattered and amused with expensive shows.

Wedding ceremonies were still largely of a heathen character,[4] accompanied by dances, cymbals, flutes, profane songs, and drunkenness. Escorted by a hired theatrical troupe, the bride was led in procession in the evening through the streets, with lines painted beneath her eyes, amidst the waving of lamps and the jests or songs of a mixed multitude of idlers. At births there were frenzied rejoicings. Lights were kindled and received names, and the name allotted to the candle which lasted longest was

[1] *Hom. Genes.* i.; *Matt.* 71.
[2] *Matt.* 62; *cf. Act.* 18.
[3] *Ep. Cor.* i. 12.
[4] *Ibid.*

conferred on the child, being regarded as an omen of long life. Talismans, such as bells or red threads, were attached to the child's hands, and his forehead was marked with mud and water to avert envy from him. At funeral processions immense concourses of hired mourners were paraded, slaves walked clad in sackcloth, and the horses of the deceased, also in mourning, were led along by grooms.[1]

As is often the case in the decay of a religion, the remains of heathenism had become infected with magic, and this tendency spread to many nominal Christians. A general belief in the activity of demons seems characteristic of an age of excessive luxury and poverty in close proximity to one another, and it was encouraged by what survived of Neoplatonist views and by several half-Christian sects, such as the Gnostic and Manichaean. Thus both the pagan rhetorician Libanius and Chrysostom attribute the fierce outbreak at Antioch under Theodosius to the malevolent action of demons. Wizards were believed to murder children in order to use their souls for necromantic purposes,[2] and Chrysostom, though denying the possibility of such use, considers that demons do frequent tombs in order to produce a belief that the souls of the dead assume the form of demons. Thus Julian was accused, no doubt unjustly, of murdering human victims both at Antioch and Carrhae in order to foretell the future by haruspicy.[3] Sick children were treated by fastening on amulets or labels with names of rivers, and it seems to have been a common practice to light lamps and offer sacrifices to spirits by the sides of rivers and fountains to obtain relief from disease, or to seek the same end through incantations or magical applications of ashes, soot, or salt.[4] Even at a much

[1] *De Stat.* iii. [2] *Hom. Matt.* xxviii.

[3] Theodoret, *H. E.* iv. 21.

[4] Chrys. *Coloss.* viii.; Cyril Hier. *Catech.* xvi. 8; *cf.* Luc. *Tragodopodagr.* 265 *seq.*

earlier date Lucian[1] mentions a famous Syrian wonder-worker who, by incantations or threats, could drive out the demons from those possessed if he received sufficient payment.

Horoscopes were constantly taken, and all sorts of divination and omen-taking practised. Even the Jews of Antioch had similar failings. Their synagogues were given out to be the haunt of potent spirits, oaths before whom were more binding than any others. At Daphne they had an underground shrine to which the superstitious resorted in the hope of receiving nocturnal visions.[2] A somewhat similar shrine sacred to Hecate was reached by a descent of 365 steps, and the worship of the mysterious chthonic deity Zeus Philius had many votaries. An image of this god, which was believed to have oracular powers, was used in opposition to the Christians by the persecutor Theotecnus.[3]

Looking out on all this luxury and superstition were the sombre figures of "the monks on the mountain," who served to point the moral of many a sermon, and of whom Chrysostom himself had once been one. Living on a handful of grapes or figs, with water from an adjoining spring, they spent long years in caves or huts, or even some disused cistern, associating with none, though perhaps accepting some simple gifts from those who respected their self-abandonment. Asceticism, which had spread from Egypt through Palestine, took firm root round Antioch, where, besides the hermits and pillar-saints, regular monastic communities grew up. They were often peopled by Syrians rather than Greeks, and so helped to revive in the immediate neighbourhood of the Greek capital the use of the neglected Semitic speech of Syria.

It is not surprising that the wealth and splendour of

[1] *Philops.* 16. [2] Chrys. *Contr. Jud.* [3] Eus. *H. E.* ix. 2.

Antioch roused jealousy elsewhere, and that foreigners seldom give the citizens much praise. It must, however, be admitted that the city produced a number of eloquent preachers and orators; that it maintained extensive colleges and schools; that charity supported numerous poor; and that many Christians were prepared to die a martyr's death or give up all the splendours which surrounded them for the gloomy life of a cenobite or hermit.

The public festivals most often referred to were the Olympia at Daphne and the Maiuma. Apollo was the ancestral patron of the Seleucid family, and the founder of Antioch, attracted by the flowery and well-wooded aspect of Daphne, erected a splendid temple, enlarged by Antiochus Epiphanes, in his honour. It was surrounded by a grove of laurels and cypresses of remarkable height and beauty, which even under the Romans it was forbidden by law to cut.[1] In it there also stood a temple of Artemis, and near by a stream received the epithet of Castalian, and was the site of an oracle. Whether the fountain was really a natural siphon on the principle of the "ebbing and flowing wells," or whether volcanic agency was at work, the water was periodically troubled; and the superstitious believed that winds and vapours escaped from it. The priests in charge were at the same time affected with ecstasy, and answered inquirers as the god directed.[2]

The whole area, which was largely covered with wood, and had numerous streams, was ten miles in circumference, with the sacred enclosure at the centre, containing the temples (others were dedicated to Zeus and Isis), and an Olympian racecourse. A few ruins in the village of Bet el-Ma still mark the spot. The Apollo temple, which

[1] Procop. *B. Pers.* ii. 14.
[2] Nonnus, *Narr. ad Greg. invict.* ii. 14 (in Westermann's *Mythographi*).

possessed the right of asylum,[1] had rows of columns on two sides, and a fretted ceiling of cypress-wood resting on pillars. Its walls were bright with marble, and it contained a colossal statue of Apollo almost reaching to the roof, a work of the Athenian sculptor Bryaxis. The exposed surface of this was of white marble, the rest, covered by a gold-embroidered robe, of wood. The god wore a laurel wreath, his eyes were jacinths, recalling the name of his favourite Hyacinthus; in one hand he held a sacrificial bowl, with the other touched a harp hanging from his shoulder, his mouth open as if singing.[2] This statue, which perished in the fire during Julian's visit, appears on several local coins, as under Philip and Decius; it also gave oracles, the method being now unknown. The god's refusal to answer Julian was attributed by that emperor to the proximity of the bones of Babylas, a martyr buried in a neighbouring church. Near the statue was a copy of the chryselephantine Zeus Olympius of Phidias,[3] and effigies of benefactors to the temple. Within the enclosure stood a bay-tree, into which the nymph Daphne had been transformed when pursued here by Apollo. This was confirmed by the discovery in the time of Seleucus, at the root of the tree, of a dart inscribed with the title Phoebus, the archer god having let off his arrows at it in his disappointment.[4]

Emperors who stayed at Daphne encamped in tents, but a palace was built in the time of Diocletian (who also restored the temple), and beautified by Theodosius.

A Daphnaean festival had existed from Seleucid times, but under the Romans the suburb became the scene of the

[1] Strab. 16, 2, 6; *cf.* ii. Macc. 4, 32: "Onias withdrew himself into a sanctuary at Daphne, that lieth by Antiochia."

[2] *Vita Artemii* in Mai *Spicil. Rom.* iv. 379; Liban. *Or.* xvi.

[3] Amm. xxii. 13.

[4] Liban. *Or.* xi.

greatest celebration of games in all Syria, lasting forty-five days in July and August. On his return to Rome Augustus had been accompanied by Sosibius, a rich senator of Antioch, who on his death left his fortune, fifteen talents of gold, to establish a thirty-days' festival, with dramatic performances, dances, chariot-races, athletic and gladiatorial contests. However, the emperor Claudius received an appeal from the city, stating that the magistrates were embezzling the revenues and letting the games fall into disuse, and requesting that the right of changing them into an Olympian festival might be bought from the Eleans in Greece. They were thenceforward, like the true Olympia, put under the control of Hellanodicae, and the victors were crowned with laurel. Further complaints of a like character were repeated early in the third century, and the duration of the festival was then fixed at forty-five days, and fresh officials to superintend it were created. An *alytarch*, who supervised the performance and adjudged the prizes, received divine honours, and was forbidden while his office lasted to enter a house or lie on a bed. He thus rested on rushes on the stone floor of an open temple. His costume was very rich—a white robe embroidered with gold, a crown of pearls and rubies, ebony staff, and white sandals. He was assisted by an *amphithales*, and by a scribe chosen by the senate and people, who wore a white robe and a gold crown worked into laurel-leaves. These offices all occur at the Greek Olympia, but the adoption of priestly costume seems Asiatic in origin. The alytarchia in the fifth century was transferred to the Comes Orientis, having previously been held on more than one occasion by an emperor. Thus Diocletian, in his last visit to Syria (A.D. 302), adopted the costume, only substituting the imperial purple for the usual white robe. At the close of the festival, as a token of his coming abdication, he laid

aside both priestly and imperial robes, saying: "I have given up the sovereignty, I have worn the apparel of the immortal Zeus."

On the eastern side of Antioch stood an open exercising-ground or xystus, surrounded by porticoes and seats, and used in the training for the games, which lasted thirty days, probably the first thirty of the festival. Not far from this in the third century was a plethrium, intended especially for practice in wrestling. Strangers came to compete from distant parts, often rich men with bands of slaves, who split up into parties or sections, as at the Circus. Boxing, wrestling, chariot-racing, musical competitions, and recitations of tragic passages or hymns all took place; and women were admitted to some of the musical and athletic contests—a proof of the degeneracy of manners. Victors received certain priestly honours, and were excused land-taxes and liturgies. For a time, like the victors in the games at Tarsus, they were taken away to be crowned at Codrigae on the borders of Cilicia, the scene of Severus's great victory over Niger, perhaps to conciliate the conqueror, whom Antioch had deeply offended.

Festivals and temples were mainly Greek, but there are occasional references to cults of a more Oriental character. The death of Adonis was still celebrated with solemnity in the time of Julian. The shrine on the Casian Mount dedicated to Zeus Casius is clearly an old Semitic open-air altar, similar to the oracular shrine on Mount Carmel, and the centre of a periodical festival attended from Antioch. The god was a weather deity, and sunrise was eagerly watched for from this exalted spot. When Hadrian made his offering, rain and lightning were important signs; and Julian climbed the mountain to sacrifice in a drought,[1] as the priests of Baal had done on Carmel in Elijah's time.

[1] Amm. 16, 13.

The Maiuma festival, popularly derived from the fact that it was held in May, lasted for thirty days, in honour of Dionysus and Aphrodite. It consisted of nightly celebrations, accompanied by brilliant illuminations and scenic displays. Festivals with similar names occur at Sophene in Armenia, at Ostia, and Gaza. As the latter city was a seat of the worship of a marine Aphrodite, wine was its staple product, and Maiumas the name of its harbour, it may be looked on as the starting-point. Satyrs, Cupids, and Adonis took part, and there was a representation of the birth of Aphrodite from the sea, surrounded by Nereids. At Antioch the festival probably took place on the banks of the Orontes, and, as might be expected, was the scene of grave irregularities, which the emperors were long unable to suppress.

There is only space to mention a few of the finest public buildings. The splendid colonnaded street of Epiphanes, rebuilt under Tiberius, was of great breadth, with covered side-walks, and over four miles in length from the east of the city to the west, across the lowest slope of Mount Silpius, which had been artificially levelled. Statues and bronzes were attached to many of the pillars, which seem to have been gilt, like those of Palmyra. The colonnades of Palmyra, Gerasa, and Gamala were all designed on the same model. Such use of gold-leaf was common at Antioch; the temple of Zeus, on the Capitol, had its walls and ceiling so covered before the Roman era, and it was afterwards used to adorn the gate on the Daphne road. Under Pius the carriage-way between the columns was paved with Egyptian granite. From the centre of the street, the *omphalos* of the city, marked by a carved stone with Apollo seated on it, a colonnaded road led north to the island, passing the Nymphaeum, a fine, vaulted building with marble columns and walls, and ever-flowing

fountains. The marriage festivals of the poorer classes took place here.

The island, which was enclosed by a wall, was regularly laid out, four colonnaded roads meeting at the centre, which was marked by four united arches. The northern colonnaded arm served as a vestibule to the Palace, which on the river side presented a two-storied portico with tall towers. The building of itself covered a quarter of the island, and contained so many chambers and porticoes that, according to Libanius, even those familiar with the place were liable to mistake the doors.

At several cross-roads stood ornamental tetrapyles, some enriched with marbles and mosaics. Adjoining the principal forum was the Senate-house, a basilica of the time of Constantine, and a museum which was ultimately absorbed in the praetorium of the Comes Orientis. Another forum of the fourth century was carried on arches over the Parmenius stream to the south-east of the chief cross-roads, and four basilicae adjoined it. Two libraries had existed in Seleucid times, at the head of one of which was the famous scholar Euphorion. The fate of these is unknown; but a beautiful though small temple dedicated to Trajan by his successor Hadrian was changed into a library by Julian. Along with its books it was burned through the intemperate zeal of Jovian.

Aqueducts ran from Daphne and from the higher or old town to the new, and must have been carried by bridges over the Orontes. One of the finest was attributed to Hadrian, bringing water from a tower at Daphne which adjoined a shrine of the Naiads. One channel supplied the citizens of Daphne, which was then growing into a residential town, the other was brought to Antioch over rough valleys, which it crossed on piles, and several torrents had to be diverted to make way for it.

There were many fine churches and martyria. The Apostolic church stood in the old town, and was believed to be on the site where the apostles held their services. It was for defending this from violation by an emperor, variously described as Philip, Decius, and Numerian, that the Antiochene priest Babylas suffered martyrdom. The great church begun by Constantine and decorated by Constantius lay across the Orontes in an extensive walled enclosure. It was octagonal, with crypts beneath, and, outside, *exedrae* rising in stories. The interior was rich with gold and bronze ornamentation and statues. Columns and walls shone with jewels, and above all rose a huge dome, its ceiling covered with gold. The general style thus resembled the church of St. Vitalis at Ravenna.

Under Justinus, early in the sixth century, came the fifth and perhaps the worst of the earthquakes of Antioch, accompanied by thunderbolts and a far-reaching fire. Except those on the hill-side, almost all the buildings were wrecked, the great church of Constantine suffered severely, and the killed were estimated at 250,000, many of them strangers who had crowded in to the Ascensiontide festival. Numbers of victims were dug out from the ruins in a dying state, and fugitives were robbed by the rustics. Subsequent shocks greatly injured both the port of Seleucia and Daphne, which had received many fine buildings under Zeno. Justinus had despatched officials and large sums of money to restore aqueducts and bridges, and his nephew and successor Justinian, with his consort Theodora, added several fine churches and remitted the tribute for three years. The name of the city was now ordered to be changed to Theupolis, partly perhaps from the number of churches, the old name being thought to bring ill-luck. An oracle was even fabricated and discovered: "Thou, O unhappy city, shalt no more be called the town of

Antiochus"; but, as was natural, the new title had no great vogue.

The great Persian invasion under Chosroes Nushirvan in A.D. 540 proved fatal to the eastern capital. The Romans, exhausted by their recent efforts in the West, kept no adequate garrison in Syria. The emperor's nephew Germanus, who was sent to inspect the fortifications, found that Antioch was readily assailable from Mons Casius, for on that side stood a great rock, little lower than the wall.

Attempts were made to buy off the Persians, who had reduced Beroea without much difficulty and advanced on the capital. Encouraged, however, by the arrival of a small body of troops from the Lebanon district, the citizens resolved to resist, and roused the Persian king to fury by mocking speeches hurled from the battlements—the last reference we have to their caustic humour towards men of high rank. The inhabitants proved themselves no cowards. Youths, accustomed to the riots which so often accompanied the Circensian games, powerfully assisted the soldiers. The principal attack, as had been foreseen, was made from the cliffs on the south, and here the besieged widened the towers by a kind of platform standing out from the parapet. As the fight proceeded the ropes which sustained these beams broke, and an alarm arose that the walls were giving way. Panic spread among the soldiers, and a rush to the gate ensued. Many persons were crushed beneath the horses' feet, but the soldiers succeeded in escaping through the Daphnetic gate, which was purposely left unguarded by the enemy.

The Persians, fearing an ambush, for a time hesitated to enter, and the younger citizens, though badly armed and some merely wielding stones, kept up a desperate resistance. At last all were overcome, the great church was stripped of its treasures and marble, and, except for

the walls and some outlying districts, almost the whole city was burned. The victorious Chosroes also visited Seleucia, where he washed in the Mediterranean and sacrificed to the sun, but did no damage, and Daphne, where he avenged the death of a Persian nobleman by destroying a church.

Most of the Antiochenes were carried away into Assyria, and a city was founded for them near the Persian capital Ctesiphon, and called Antioch of Chosroes. A reminiscence of its old splendour attached to this shadow of Antioch. It received baths and a circus, and the chariot-drivers and artists of the old city and other towns of Syria were allowed to ply their trades. As a special privilege, an escaped slave whom any citizen should acknowledge as his kinsman could not be reclaimed by his Persian master.[1]

Thus the ancient Antioch, which for over eight hundred years had stood for Greek art and civilization in Syria, disappeared amidst fire and slaughter, and the small mediaeval town which succeeded it never attained to great distinction. Though the old walls still stood, the area was felt to be far in excess of any population which could be collected. The whole of Epiphaneia, the district resting on the mountain, was abandoned, and the river frontage was also greatly reduced. The mountain torrent which entered through the ravine on the south was dammed and carried into the town through conduits. The new walls, of mixed stone and brick, were of immense thickness, and could support four horses abreast, being strengthened with numerous towers. The whole area was, as far as possible, levelled and cleared of ashes, and artisans were brought from elsewhere to help the remaining citizens in the work of rebuilding. A fine road paved with white marble ran through the centre, perhaps nearly along the course of the ancient colonnades.

[1] Procop. *B. Pers.* ii. 6 *seq.*

Justinian also had various public edifices erected—baths, a theatre, a *xenon* or hospital for the sick poor, and several churches, that of the Virgin being well endowed and of great size.[1] The town thus became more defensible than previously, but received few subsequent additions.

In the time of Maurice came another visitation. An earthquake destroyed the great church which had survived the Persian onslaught, and only the apse remained. This had been roofed with cedar from Daphne after the damage done under Justinus. Several suburbs were also wrecked, and many thousands killed. A vivid description of this shock is left by an eyewitness whose own wedding it interrupted.[2]

While the empire was still suffering from the incapacity of Phocas, but recently displaced by the able Heraclius, a fresh and more lasting Persian occupation of Syria took place (A.D. 611). The last great member of the Sassanid dynasty, Chosroes Purviz, overran almost the whole Asiatic possessions of the empire. A series of brilliant campaigns at last recovered Syria for the Romans (A.D. 627), but the breathing-space was short. In A.D. 636 all the chief towns of northern Syria fell into the hands of the Saracens. Antioch, recovered for a time, was definitely occupied in A.D. 638, and only escaped destruction by paying to the caliph the immense sum of 300,000 pieces of gold. For over three centuries it continued under the Moslem yoke, a provincial town indeed, but the seat of a patriarch and an important Christian congregation. Then in A.D. 969 the reviving Byzantine empire recovered it and a small district round, and it was not till A.D. 1081 that it finally passed out of the possession of the Romans before the advancing power of the Seljuk Turks. Another period in the history of Antioch opens with its position as the capital of a small Frankish principality (A.D. 1098).

[1] Procop. *Aedif.* ii. 9 *seq.*

[2] Evagr. *H. E.* vi. 8.

CHAPTER IV

THE SYRIAN DYNASTIES AT ROME

> Iam pridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes
> Et linguam et mores et cum tibicine chordas
> Obliquas, nec non gentilia tympana secum
> Vexit. —JUVENAL.

THE town of Homs is an industrial centre of some import ance, with a station on the pilgrims' line from Aleppo to Mecca. It lies on the right bank of the Orontes near a lake, on the edge of a plain which soon merges in the great desert, but especially to the north of the town is fertile. To the west rise the snow-covered heights of Lebanon, to the south the furthest spurs of Antilibanus. An important trade-route seventy miles long joined the ancient Emesa to Palmyra, and it was the point where the shortest road from the latter to the sea crossed the north and south road from Beroea (Aleppo) to Damascus.

The government of Emesa till the beginning of the second century was left by the Romans to the Arab family of Sampsigeramus, which also seems to have possessed priestly functions. These were retained when the district was incorporated in the province. Herodian[1] dwells on the magnificence of the temple of the sun-god Elagabal, in which the sacred black stone was preserved, and on its ornamentation of gold, silver, and jewels. It had a general right of asylum, neighbouring princes and governors sent rich

[1] v. 3.

yearly offerings, and it was the centre of an important festival which, as the god was identified by the Greeks with Apollo, received the title of *Helia Pythia.* The rhetorical account of the shrine in a late Roman poet can hardly depend on personal observation, as it seems to have been destroyed about the time of Constantine; but if Avienus[1] represents a genuine tradition, it stood on high ground and had a lofty roof. A hill adjoining the town to the south-east, surrounded by a ditch, has its surface strongly encased in masonry, and its level top covered with ruins. Some of these belong to an Arab castle, now destroyed by the Turks, which may have been erected on the site of the temple.

The town was probably strongly fortified, and played an important part in the wars of the third century. The inhabitants of the district were warlike; auxiliary cohorts were raised among them,[2] and in inscriptional lists of legionaries several names of Emesenes occur. The title of colony or *metrocolonia* was conferred by Caracalla, and occurs on the local coinage, which also represents the sun temple, and another erected in honour of the emperor's mother Domna.[3]

By the end of the Antonine age the Syrian legions were stationed nearer the frontier than in the early empire, as at Samosata, Phaena in Trachonitis, and Bostra. Emesa was also at times a garrison town, and to this we may perhaps ascribe the marriage which gave rise to that extraordinary

[1] 1084 *seq.*

Et qua Phoebeam procul incunabula lucem
Prima fovent, Emesus fastigia celsa renident.
Nam diffusa solo latus explicat, ac subit auras
Turribus in caelum nitentibus. . . .
. . . Libanus frondosa cacumina turgent,
Et tamen his celsi certant fastigia templi.

[2] *Eph. Epigr.* v. 192. [3] *Cf.* Vaillant, *Num. col. et mun.* ii. 20.

episode, the rule of the first Syrian dynasty at Rome. L. Septimius Severus was a native of the Phoenician colony of Great Leptis in North Africa. Though his mother-tongue was Punic, he received a fair education in Latin literature, and for a time acted as a pleader. Entering the army, he gained rapid promotion, and in A.D. 179 was stationed in Syria as legate of the *leg. iv. Scythica.* At this time an oracular response, perhaps from the Bel temple at Apamea, was spread abroad to the effect that the elder daughter of Julius Bassianus, priest of Elagabal at Emesa, was fated to marry one who should become a king. The future empress, Julia Domna, and her sister Maesa were still mere children, but Severus, already a widower, uniting as he did ambition and credulity, received a promise of the hand of a princess twenty years his junior. The nuptials were celebrated, probably at Lugdunum in Gaul, a few years later, and two sons were born, the elder called Bassianus after his grandfather, but nicknamed Caracalla, the younger Septimius Geta, who jointly occupied the throne after the death of Severus.[1]

[1] GENEALOGY OF THE SYRIAN DYNASTIES.

JULIUS BASSIANUS OF EMESA.

L. Sept. Severus ╤ Julia Domna. Julia Maesa ╤ Julius Avitus.
Imp. 193-211.

M. Aurel. Antoninus, (Caracalla) Imp. 211-217.
P. Sept. Geta, Imp. 211-212.
Varius Marcellus of Apamea ╤ Julia Soaemias.
Julia Mamaea ╤ Gessius Marcianus.

Varius Avitus Bassianus (Elagabalus), Imp. 218-222.
Alexianus (Alexander Severus), Imp. 222-235.

MARINUS OF BOSTRA

M. Jul. Philippus, Imp. 244-249 ╤ Otacilia Severa.

M. Jul. Philippus II., Imp. 247-249.

In the period of confusion following the break-up of the Antonine dynasty Severus was in command of the powerful garrison of Pannonia, which eventually enabled him, after the death of Pertinax, to uphold his claim to the throne against all rivals. The most formidable competitor was Pescennius Niger, who had previously held some command in Palestine, and was at this time legate of Syria. His administration had been wise, he maintained good discipline among his troops, and could probably count on the support not only of the three Syrian legions, but of the three others which garrisoned Palestine and Arabia. At Antioch Niger had won the favour of the citizens by the heartiness with which he entered into their amusements, regularly attending their festivals, and providing shows at his own expense. He was accordingly proclaimed emperor at Antioch amid much enthusiasm, and was led in triumph to the various temples. Coins were issued in his honour with the figure of an eagle, and the words "Divine providence." His residence became an imperial palace, where he received embassies and offers of help from the far East, and many of the commons of Antioch enlisted under his banner. Berytus also favoured him, but Laodicea, a long-standing rival of Antioch, and Tyre, which was hostile to Berytus, stood out, and were severely punished by the African auxiliaries in Niger's service.

He, however, proved himself an incompetent statesman, dilatory, and with an ungrounded contempt for his rival, neglecting to assert his claims in Europe while there was still time. Thus his inexperienced soldiers and volunteers were easily defeated in the plain of Issus by the trained troops of Severus (A.D. 193 or 194). Returning to Antioch Niger found the city almost empty except for mourners. He hid in the suburbs, but was detected and put to death, and the city felt the weight of the victor's resentment. Large sums

were contributed by Severus to restore Tyre and Laodicea, the latter of which gained the title of metropolis and other privileges, while Antioch, losing its metropolitan rank, was degraded by having its jurisdiction subordinated to Laodicea. Though, on the petition of his elder son, Severus later consented to restore Antioch's independence, it ceased henceforth to be the capital of all Syria, Phoenice being from 194 a separate province, with Tyre as its chief town.[1] The object of this change was probably to avoid the concentration of too great power in the hands of a single legate, the danger of which had recently been exemplified in the cases of Avidius Cassius and Niger.

In A.D. 201, after the Mesopotamian war, Severus was again at Antioch, and a kind of reconciliation took place. Fine baths were added, and splendid festivities attended the assumption by Caracalla of the toga virilis and later of the consulship.

Before this, however—indeed, soon after his defeat of Niger—Severus carried out an extensive reorganization in Syria, before he felt it safe to proceed against his western rival Clodius Albinus. In Palestine a war had been going on between the Jews and Samaritans, the former of whom were opposed to Niger, who had refused to reduce their imposts. Severus disfranchised the Samaritan capital Neapolis (Sichem), near Mount Gerizim, and planted a Roman colony at Samaria, perhaps to keep watch on the surrounding districts. Parthia, too, whither many fugitives from Niger's army had fled, showed signs of hostility,

[1] Palestine had already been cut off from Syria by Vespasian; northern Syria from the time of Severus was called Magna, or Coele; Phoenice, under a separate legate, extended to the borders of Palestine and of Trajan's Arabian province. The towns of Emesa, Damascus, and Palmyra, though far from the old Phoenicia, thus fell within the southerly province, as well as the former tetrarchies, Auranitis, Batanea, and Trachonitis.

and the parts of Mesopotamia brought within the Roman sphere of influence were in revolt. Severus, recognizing the need of securing this north-eastern frontier of the empire in a permanent manner, marched into Mesopotamia, and founded some military colonies, strongly garrisoned, beyond the Euphrates, of which the most important was Nisibis.

A few years later (A.D. 197), having settled the European provinces, he returned to Syria with large reinforcements. Nisibis, which was being besieged by the Parthians, was relieved, and, assisted by the Euphrates fleet, Severus penetrated to the heart of the Parthian monarchy. Ctesiphon was forced to surrender, and was pillaged, and Armenia accepted the Roman suzerainty. The tottering dynasty of the Arsacidae never recovered from this blow, and Mesopotamia was left as a Roman province under military rule and garrisoned by two legions.

In Syria the measures taken by this vigorous emperor in his two visits, though it is not always possible to distinguish between them, were likewise far-reaching. A Jewish revolt, perhaps in sympathy with the Parthians, in whose empire a great number of Jews had settled, was suppressed.[1] Progress was made with the fortification of the eastern frontier, especially in the region of Damascus; and both Severus and his successors were liberal in granting colonial rights and exemption from land-tax (*ius Italicum*), here, as elsewhere, helping to raise the provincial to a level with Italian towns. The fine port of Laodicea became a colony in this reign, and took the title Septimia Aurelia in honour of the emperor and his son. Tyre (Colonia Septimia Metropolis), Sebaste or Samaria, and perhaps Palmyra, which gave useful aid in the Parthian war, gained a like dignity. Caracalla conferred the colonial status on Antioch and Emesa, Elagabalus on Sidon, Alexander on Damascus,

[1] Spart. *Sev.* 16.

Philip on Neapolis. About the same time Gadara received the title of Colonia Valentia,[1] and rose into celebrity as a resort for tourists, who were attracted by the natural warm baths; and it is referred to by a writer of the period as a watering-place second only to Baiae.[2]

The municipal system of remoter towns in Batanea and Roman Arabia was developed, the forts kept well supplied, and many roads and other public works were undertaken. In Phoenicia several roads, as one from Sidon to Tyre, are shown by the milestones to date from the period of Severus, and the neighbourhood of Berytus was improved by the employment of soldiers to cut through the rock which obstructed the course of the River Lycus, in the reign of Caracalla.[3]

One of the finest examples of the engineering and architecture of the period is the well-preserved Khiakhta bridge, thrown over the River Chabinas near Samosata about A.D. 200. It has an imposing barrel-vault of great span, and the road at each end is carefully levelled with the bridge by embankments. A breastwork of dark blue limestone stands on each side, with pillars at the angles, dedicated by the four chief towns of Commagene to Severus, his wife, and two sons.[4] These have foliaged capitals, and once supported statues. Adjoining are small altars used in the imperial cult.

The reign of Severus is often regarded as that in which the military monarchy, into which the constitutional principate had developed, threw off all disguise. Military pay was increased, legionaries were stationed in Italy, and their licence was hardly curbed. At the same time a new attitude towards civil law manifested itself. The first dynasty of non-European origin coincides with the growth of an

[1] *Cf.* Renan, *Mission* 191.

[2] Eunapius, *Vit. Iambl.*

[3] C. I. L. iii. 206.

[4] *Eph. Epigr.* v. 1884.

Oriental conception of sovereignty. The senate received numerous members from the eastern provinces, and the Syrian lawyers, whose great school of Berytus comes into prominence at this time, helped to evolve fresh legal maxims and codes. The imperial authority was held to be free from all restraint of civil law, and to be in no sense delegated by the senate or people, or possessed in partnership with the senate, which henceforward ceased to pass *senatus consulta*. A logical consequence of this was that all subjects were equal, unless specially promoted by the emperor's favour. This general levelling of all free inhabitants to a single type, which took the form of a wholesale conferment of the now almost worthless franchise, was effected under Caracalla.

The distinction between imperial and senatorial provinces ceased to be of importance. All commands were filled by the emperor, and all provincial dues were paid to the *fiscus*, the *aerarium* surviving as the municipal chest of the city of Rome. Provincial towns were now frequently placed under curators as regular imperial magistrates, and by Caracalla's constitution the use of Roman civil law extended over all organized communities.

The empress Julia Domna, though seldom interfering in public affairs during her husband's life, had encouraged his ambitions. Possessed of some learning, skilled in astronomy, and with a taste for literature and science, she became the centre of an important *salon* at Rome, displaying a charm and versatility rare with real Roman matrons Many Syrians and other Asiatics were members of this circle, as Ulpian the jurist, Galen the physician, Diogenes Laërtius the historian of philosophy, Philostratus the sophist, and the Italian-Greek scientist Aelian. The "lady interested in philosophy," to whom Diogenes dedicated his great work, was either Julia herself or a member of her

entourage; and she suggested to Philostratus the compilation of his famous life of Apollonius of Tyana, which did much to crystallize the vaguely held Neo-Pythagorean tenets of third-century mysticism. In fact, though little real literature was produced, the circle must have contributed towards familiarizing the Roman world with the higher aspects of Asiatic religious thought.

Though unable to prevent the murder of her younger son Geta by the jealous and cruel Caracalla within a few months of their father's death, Julia exercised some control over his policy, and doubtless co-operated in the reforms which made his reign a period of progress in spite of his own unsatisfactory character.

Other members of the Emesene priest's family gradually attached themselves to the court. Domna's sister Maesa had become the wife of Julius Avitus, a rich man who held the chief command in several provinces, and rose to the consulship in A.D. 209. This pair had two daughters, Soaemias[1] and Mamaea, both married to Syrians of rank, and each the mother of a future emperor.

Soaemias, whose coins show her to have had a more Oriental cast of countenance than other members of the family, was frivolous and fond of pleasure. Her husband, Varius Marcellus, was a native of Apamea, but their son, the future Elagabalus, is stated to have been born at Emesa, where he eventually inherited the priesthood.

The other sister, Mamaea, was the wife of Gessius Marcianus of Arce in Phoenicia, where their son Alexianus was born. Her character stood much higher than that of Soaemias. Less able than Domna, less ambitious than

[1] So named on her coins, but some historians, as Lampridius and Eutropius, call her Symiamira, and she may well have had both names, which are derived from the Syrian deity Simia. The longer form incorporates the suffix *marat*, mistress.

Maesa, she exercised a great, perhaps excessive, influence over her son, to whom she devoted herself, inspiring him with a piety and love of moderation which make the reign of Alexander Severus a pathetic interval of orderliness and sobriety, which contrasted strangely with the extravagance and debauchery of his predecessor, and with the military licence to which Mamaea and her son were at last the undeserving victims.

It was, however, the grandmother Maesa who displayed the highest political ability of the whole family. Steadfast and persevering, able to make her great wealth subserve her own ends, she forced her descendants to the front, corrupted the army, and made the superstition of eastern troops her instrument. Similarly, when she found that the vices of her elder grandson were alienating the good-will of the nation, she did not scruple to fling him aside in favour of the younger, and so retain her own ascendancy.

The reign of Caracalla was short and uneventful. He consorted chiefly with soldiers, to whose dislike he sacrificed Papinian, the Syrian jurist, a kinsman of his own. Some military reforms were carried out, and part of the army was organized in a kind of phalanx formation; but an expedition undertaken by him in Germany led to small results.

The last act of the reign was an expedition against the Parthians, and this produced some changes in the status of Mesopotamia. The Arab dynasty of Abgar was removed from Osrhoene, and their capital, Edessa, which had already become an important centre for native learning and literature, as well as Carrhae in Mesopotamia, received colonial rights.

While Caracalla was conducting this campaign against the Parthians in Mesopotamia, the last Parthian war in which Rome was to engage, Domna directed the civil

government from Antioch (A.D. 217). It happened that the emperor made an excursion to visit the famous temple at Carrhae dedicated to the Semitic moon-god, perhaps the same as the Aglibol of Palmyra; and in the course of it he was murdered by a centurion, acting under orders from the praetorian prefect Macrinus, a Moorish lawyer, who thereupon assumed the purple. Domna was treated with respect by the new emperor, but required to leave Antioch, where he established his court. In despair, however, at the downfall of her family, she committed suicide, and the two princesses, Soaemias and Mamaea, both now widows, together with their mother Maesa and their sons, the future emperors, put themselves under the protection of their ancestral god Elagabal of Emesa. Here their descent, and the great wealth which Maesa had collected during the two past reigns, made them generally welcome.

Macrinus soon fell into disfavour, owing to his feeble conduct of the war with the Parthians, from whom he eventually bought peace at an immense cost, and to his severity towards the army, which was kept in camp through the winter. A large detachment he unwisely allowed to winter in the neighbourhood of Emesa. Here Elagabalus and his cousin Alexander were consecrated as priests of the sun temple which their ancestor Bassianus had served; and every opportunity was given to the clients and friends of Maesa, and to the soldiers, many of whom were of Syrian origin, to visit the temple and gaze at the splendid robes and youthful beauty of the elder prince, whose name of Antoninus recalled a dynasty long held in reverence by all subjects of the empire. Numerous bribes were distributed, partly, perhaps, from the temple treasure, partly from the accumulated wealth of Maesa, who even condescended to spread the rumour that Elagabalus was

in reality the offspring of the murdered emperor Caracalla, thus claiming a double descent from the Emesene house, and connecting her grandson with the family of the Severi.

Opportune omens, an eclipse to which a comet succeeded, enhanced the effect, and it was soon thought safe for the imperial family to establish themselves in the camp, where the young prince, who was hardly more than fifteen, was proclaimed emperor under the once honoured title of M. Aurelius Antoninus. An army sent against him by Macrinus was won over and the officers murdered. Macrinus made great efforts to secure the *Legio II. Parthica*, then wintering at Apamea, but on the arrival of the enemy's forces the city, the birthplace of the young emperor's father, surrendered without resistance. The decisive battle was fought at Immae, not far from Antioch, in the summer of A.D. 218. Elagabalus, Soaemias, and Maesa all showed much courage in urging on their troops; and the praetorians and other westerns who supported Macrinus after a fierce conflict gave way before the Asiatic legions. Macrinus fled, and was later put to death at Chalcedon. Antioch fell into the hands of the victors, but was spared on making a donation to each of the soldiers. A few officials, including the governors of Syria and Arabia, who had sided with the usurper, were put to death, but there was no general massacre.

The Roman senate was informed of the change of affairs, which was readily accepted throughout the empire, where the usurpation of Macrinus had not been universally acknowledged; but the senate was made to feel that the new reign would be something out of the common by the arrival of a picture of the priest-emperor in festal robes, together with another of the sacred stone of Emesa, with orders that they should be set up over the statue of Victory, and offerings be made to them.

Elagabalus represents a curious reversion to a very early type of Asiatic civilization. He loved brilliant colours both in costumes and at banquets, jewels, such as necklaces, bracelets, and diadems, dances accompanied by noisy instruments, splendid processions, and extravagance in every form. His religion absorbed a great part of his life: the ritual was most gorgeous, attended by costly sacrifices, at which the altars were loaded with perfumes, and rich wines were poured over them and mingled with the blood of the victims. Yet it was not limited to exteriors. A conception of state monotheism, such as no previous emperor had evolved, is indicated in several ways. The sacred objects of other cults were brought into close connection with his own solar emblem, the Roman Palladium (which, however, the effeminate Syrian deity shrank from as the emblem of too warlike a goddess), and the stone effigy of Carthaginian Astarte; and he himself, representing the East of the empire, celebrated a marriage with a Vestal, a votary of one of Rome's most ancient cults.

The biographers of Elagabalus depict him as in some respects a monster of iniquity, and though this may be exaggerated, and such charges against devotees of the more orgiastic Syrian cults were not uncommon, his immature mind, which doubtless had some natural defects, seems to have been thrown off its balance by the splendour of his position; and his memory has come to be regarded as that of one of the most hateful of Roman princes.

After the settlement of Syria the court spent some time at Nicomedia, where Elagabalus distinguished himself by the extravagance of his gestures and costume, which, the historian says, was intermediate between that of a Syrian priest and a Persian king. He dyed his face, painted under his eyes, was accompanied in his progresses by flutes

and drums. Persons who addressed him had to kneel as to a visible emanation of the deity. At Rome the administration was left to the praetorian prefect Eutychianus and to Maesa, with her daughter Soaemias, who became joint Augustae; and the emperor devoted himself to rearing splendid temples and organizing religious processions. The Elagabalium, or chief shrine of the sun god, to which the sacred stone was moved from Emesa, stood on the south-western slope of the Palatine, towards the Circus Maximus, and was provided with many altars. Round these Elagabalus used to dance, while Syrian female musicians gave the time with cymbals and drums; and high officials bore the offerings or spices in golden vessels, themselves clad in long-sleeved tunics and white shoes. Senators and knights were compelled to look on, and those who were reported as having ridiculed the ceremony were severely punished.

Another temple was reared on land belonging to the emperor's father in the suburbs near the Praenestine gate, and to this every summer magnificent processions conveyed the sacred stone. The description of these reads like a passage in the "Arabian Nights." The emblem was carried in a gold chariot enriched with precious stones, and drawn by six horses, all white, with trappings of gold. The emperor himself ran before, holding the reins, his steps supported by attendants; torch-bearers accompanied him; wreaths, flowers, even gold-dust were strewed in the path. To emphasize the unity of the various religions, images of the other gods were carried in the same procession; and the national character of the ceremonial was illustrated by the presence, at the head, of a large detachment of soldiers. In the vicinity of the suburban shrine chariot-races and various shows took place, and lavish distributions of presents to the populace.

Though much of the government was left to the female relatives of Elagabalus, it does not seem to have suffered in consequence. Informers were not encouraged, the provinces remained quiet, nor was there any threat of foreign war since the Parthians had sunk into that decline which shortly afterwards resulted in the disappearance of their dynasty.

Like many of his predecessors, Elagabalus, his mother, and many of his favourites, were put to death by the praetorian guards, after a reign of only four years; and in his place the soldiers chose his cousin Alexander, whom Maesa had induced Elagabalus to adopt as a successor. His chief minister for the first years was the Syrian lawyer Ulpian, who had held important offices both under Severus and Caracalla. Ulpian, like Papinian, sought to control the licence of the military caste, to whose resentment he ultimately fell a victim.

Maesa died early in the new reign, and the chief place in the state fell to the emperor's mother Mamaea, who, in spite of some virtues, was not able to win popularity. She inherited her mother's love of wealth and power, rejoiced in sounding titles like *mater senatus, mater humani generis*, and continued to interfere in the government after Alexander had attained years of discretion. In fact the revolution which led to his downfall appears to have been due to the desire of the military caste to rid themselves of the rule of women and Asiatics, and to substitute a more vigorous régime.

Alexander was well trained in western learning, and his sympathies were wide. More familiar with Greek than Latin, he was versed in poetry, music, mathematics, divination, and many other arts, presenting a remarkable contrast to the brutal and unlettered Goth who succeeded him. In religion he inclined to wide toleration, lacking

much real enthusiasm. The religious curiosities and sacred stones which Elagabalus had collected were restored to their homes, the Elagabalium was rededicated to Jupiter Ultor. Coins entitle Alexander *sacerdos urbis*, and show him doing sacrifice to the goddess Roma. He forbade the worship of himself while still alive, and in a private oratory in the palace set up statues of various teachers who had benefited the human race, such as Orpheus, Zoroaster, Plato, Apollonius, and Christ; while the empress Mamaea was at one time a hearer of the famous Alexandrine theologian Origen.

During this reign the East was in a disturbed state, due partly to the lax condition of the Roman army, partly to the substitution of a strong and aggressive Persian dynasty for the failing power of Parthia. The old Persian traditions had been kept up by the hereditary priesthood of Persia, and the Magi here maintained undefiled the Zoroastrian doctrines which the Parthians, familiar as they were with Greek and Semitic idolatry, had let slip. The Persians found a champion in Ardeshir or Artaxerxes, a man of obscure birth, but claiming descent from the old Achaemenid kings. The Parthians, enfeebled by many centuries of prosperity, were overcome in three battles, in the last of which, Hormuz, the Parthian king Ardevan V., was slain (A.D. 226), and the authority of the Persian Sassanidae was acknowledged over the whole realm.

The new ruler proceeded to humble the numerous satraps, who had been attaining an almost independent position; and, after successes against both Scythians and Indians, he formed the ambitious project of winning from the Romans all that had once belonged to the empire of Darius.

The Persians accordingly secured the trade-routes along the Euphrates and Tigris, invaded Mesopotamia, and besieged Nisibis. Even before this challenge the rule of

Alexander in the East had been disturbed by two military pretenders: Taurinus, who assumed the purple in Mesopotamia,[1] and Uranius Alexander,[2] who, from the prominence of symbols connected with the worship of Elagabal on his coins, seems to have made Emesa his headquarters. These usurpers were overthrown by his lieutenants, but Alexander resolved to meet the Persian attack in person. The discipline of the eastern troops being, as recent outbreaks had proved, in a defective state, he collected forces in Italy and Illyria, and led them to Syria, completing their training at Antioch. Here a gorgeously arrayed embassy from the Persian monarch summoned him to resign all the ancient possessions of Persia, whether in Asia or Egypt.

Only confused accounts of the subsequent campaigns exist (A.D. 231-232). Three Roman armies operated against the enemy in Armenia and Mesopotamia. One failed altogether, and was nearly annihilated in the neighbourhood of Babylon; one met with some success; the largest, under Alexander himself, suffered from sickness in the summer heats of Mesopotamia, and returned to Antioch with little accomplished. The display of power had, however, impressed the Persian monarch, who for the time being withdrew his claims. Alexander, after refreshing himself amidst the pleasures of Antioch, against which even his philosophical nature was not entirely proof, set out against a fresh enemy in Europe, leaving in the Syrian capital only troops enough to repel an attack. He had conferred privileges on several cities: Damascus became a colony, Bostra from its title Alexandriana seems to have received an access of dignity; and the appearance of temples at Heliopolis, Caesarea, and Tyre on his coins suggests that these towns were the objects of his favour.

[1] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 24.

[2] Zos. i. 12. There were other troubles in Armenia (Lampr. *Alex.* 58).

Some military changes date from this reign. Even earlier *duces limitanei* appear—commanders of frontier districts, without civil authority, but practically permanent officials, independent of the provincial governors. Under Alexander the frontier armies also became fixed, sometimes on recently acquired land, which was stocked for agricultural purposes by the government. The military profession was thus in process of becoming hereditary. This was indeed more marked on the central European than the Syrian frontiers; but it had the result that it became more difficult to remove soldiers from their homes and bring them to the assistance of the luxurious and undisciplined Syrian legions. The reinforcements which were available were chiefly young and inexperienced troops. To such causes we may in part attribute the weakness of the empire in Syria during the next half century.

For some years now Persian wars succeed one another with wearisome frequency and ineffectiveness. Under Sapor (A.D. 240-271), son of Artaxerxes, a fresh advance was made, in which Mesopotamia was occupied and Antioch threatened (A.D. 243). This was checked by the arrival of the young emperor Gordian with a powerful army; but the campaign proved fatal to the Roman leader, and resulted in the accession of a second, though short-lived, Syrian dynasty.

Carrhae and Nisibis, which had fallen to the enemy, were recovered, and the Romans were preparing for an attack on Ctesiphon, when the able praetorian prefect Timesitheus, to whom Gordian was indebted for his victories, died of disease, or, as was strongly suspected, of poison. His successor, M. Julius Philippus, was a native of Bostra, of good birth, who had raised himself by his

military abilities, and now abused his position as prefect to stir up disaffection. A scarcity of provisions, due to Philip's own contrivance, brought odium on Gordian, who was murdered not far from Circesium, on the borders of Mesopotamia and Syria. The soldiers hailed Philip as his successor, and their choice was ratified by the senate (A.D. 244).

The five years of the reign of Philip, with whom was associated a son of the same name, are almost a blank. As a memorial of himself he founded the town of Philippopolis, now Shebha, at no great distance from Bostra, and parts of its colonnaded streets still remain. When he brought away his armies to Italy, he left Syria to his brother Priscus, whose oppressiveness stirred up a short-lived revolt under a pretender named Jotapianus.[1]

In A.D. 245 Philip led an expedition into Dacia, and in A.D. 248 it fell to this Nabataean stranger to preside at the thousandth birthday of the Eternal City. The secular games were celebrated with great splendour, but soon after a mutiny broke out among the troops in Dacia, and Decius, the officer who was sent to repress it, was forced by his soldiers to assume the purple. Within a few months the Philips had fallen victims to their hostility.

There ensued a period of constant war and sedition. The Germans were aggressive on the west, the Persians on the east, while within the provinces a series of military usurpers sprang up. Some of these were capable commanders, but the continuance of their power was clearly fatal to any unity within the empire. Syria had its full share of these disorders, and though the internal constitution of the towns was not seriously affected, the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus (A.D. 253-268) represent a distinct lessening of its material prosperity. The Persian

[1] Zos. i. 20; Aur. Vict. *Caes* 29.

king Sapor had succeeded in occupying Armenia, and thus found it easier to secure the strong places of Mesopotamia, Carrhae and Nisibis. In A.D. 256 he invaded Syria, and, after establishing a governor at Antioch, which offered no resistance, continued his advance into Asia Minor.

Palmyra, forced to abandon its neutrality since the aggressive Persian monarchy took the place of the decaying Parthia, now begins to be prominent. Odenathus, its hereditary chief, whose ancestor Airanes had given important help to Septimus Severus in the Parthian war, and had been distinguished by him, sought to detach the city from the empire, but was put to death with his son by Rufinus, the commander of the Roman garrison.

The events of the following years are very obscurely narrated by the Greek and Oriental historians. The emperor Valerian, though already advanced in age, arrived in Asia with an army, and sent an officer to reorganize Antioch, which had freed itself from Sapor's representative. Valerian was called away to Asia Minor by Gothic inroads, and only returned to the Persian war in A.D. 259. In A.D. 260 he was defeated and taken prisoner, along with most of his army, in the neighbourhood of Edessa. A high imperial official, Macrianus, rallied the remains of the Roman forces at Samosata, and proceeded to Emesa. Encouraged by the approval of the praetorian prefect Balista, he decided to ignore the claims of Gallienus, the captive emperor's son, and proclaimed as Valerian's successors his own sons Macrianus and Quietus, who had not risen above the military tribunate.

The Persians overran northern Syria and sacked Antioch, but, as usual, made no attempt at permanent annexations, and their depredations were checked by the exertions of Macrianus and Balista.

A kinsman of the dead Odenathus of Palmyra now comes

to the front, his name, Septimius Odenathus, recalling that of the patron of his family, Septimius Severus. At first he inclined to the Persian side, and, knowing that it was the traditional policy of eastern monarchs to encourage disaffection within the empire, sent camel-loads of provisions for use in Sapor's expedition. The king, however, expressing utter contempt at the presumption of such an unknown prince, had the gifts flung into the river, saying that if Odenathus wished to avoid his anger he should come as a suppliant, with his hands tied behind him.[1] Odenathus was thus converted to a bitter enemy, and raised Syrian and Arab bands in defence of the empire.

With these he marched in the direction of Samosata, in order to deliver Valerian, and, falling in with the Persians, then returning from Asia Minor, defeated them on the banks of the Euphrates, gaining much booty. Sapor indeed effected his retreat, after bribing the garrison of Edessa with his Syrian spoils not to impede his march; but Odenathus had freed Mesopotamia, for Nisibis and Carrhae were at once retaken, and the former, where the inhabitants were in the Persian interest, was destroyed.[2]

There were now two seats of government in Syria: Emesa, whence the rule of Macrianus extended over western Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and part of Asia Minor; and Palmyra, from which Odenathus controlled eastern Syria, Mesopotamia, and (as may be inferred from the fact that Armenian troops afterwards co-operated with his widow Zenobia)[3] part of Armenia. Macrianus, with his elder son, left for Europe, hoping to extend his empire over the western provinces, but they were defeated and slain by Aureolus, an imperial general, and later himself one of the

[1] Petr. Patric. frag. x.

[2] *Ibid.* ix.; Zos. i. 39.

[3] Vop. *Aurelian.* 28.

"thirty tyrants" (A.D. 262). Balista and his protégé Quietus remained in Syria, but Gallienus, who now reigned at Rome, preferring the native to the Roman rival, concluded an agreement with Odenathus, making him *dux* in the East, with authority over all Roman garrisons. Further troops were sent to his assistance from Europe, and he was ordered to suppress the remains of the Emesene revolt. On his approaching Emesa an outbreak took place against the authority of Quietus, who was put to death, and all Syria, for the first time for many centuries, acknowledged the rule of a native prince.

Odenathus was now in a position to renew the war with Persia, and even advanced so far as to besiege Ctesiphon, though without effect. He had left his son, Septimius Herodes, a prince whose Oriental luxury contrasted with his father's hardiness, as his representative in Syria; and by the grant from Gallienus of the title of *Imperator* Odenathus was virtually recognized as joint ruler of the East, while his son was entitled *Princeps Iuventutis*. In spite of some severe fighting (A.D. 265) Odenathus was unable to recover the imprisoned emperor Valerian, who died in captivity the next year; and he was forced to abandon the war in order to make head against a new Gothic invasion of Asia Minor. The enemy fled on his approach, and he returned in triumph to Palmyra.

Though eclipsed by his more distinguished wife, Zenobia, Odenathus is in himself a remarkable figure. Of a strong and hardy frame, he was capable of enduring the extremes of heat and cold, and was accustomed to hunt bears, lions, and leopards among mountain wilds. An Arab by race, he yet filled the chief municipal offices in his native city. As aedile he was liberal in gifts of oil for the public baths; he paid the cost of caravans; acted as *symposiarch* at religious festivals; celebrated fine spectacles and banquets;

and, like other members of his family, did much to encourage trade.

In spite of his own good faith towards the empire, his triumphs were won mainly by native troops; and the bolder spirits among his subjects, who had received little more than a veneer of western civilization, began to look forward to a time when a genuine Asiatic empire might revive. The Roman dominion seemed tottering, a prey to barbarian attacks from without, to civil discords within; and the eastern Syrians and Arabs, who had not much in common with the effeminate inhabitants of Antioch and the west, felt that the troops which had already checked the Persians might form the nucleus of an army of national independence. This more violent section, acting through the instrumentality of Maeonius, a nephew of Odenathus, assassinated that general, together with his son, at Emesa, where they were taking part in a birthday festival.

The period briefly dealt with in this chapter covers the seventy-four years from the accession of Severus to the death of Odenathus; and though we are for the most part dependent on fragmentary and often contradictory chronicles, we can see that they were years in which Syria played a leading part, and was brought into close connection with the rest of the empire. The Emesene dynasty familiarized the west with Oriental thought and the externals of royalty. The revival of the Persian nation forced the central goverment to pay constant attention to the eastern frontier, which was now becoming the scene of a conflict that lasted with intervals till Syria was lost for ever. Lastly the growth of national feeling for a time raised Palmyra to a position which seriously threatened Roman supremacy throughout the whole of Asia.

CHAPTER V

THE CHIEF CITIES OF SYRIA

> Ventosa Damascus,
> Gazaque, et arbusto palmarum dives Idume,
> Et Tyros instabilis, pretiosaque murice Sidon.
> —LUCAN.

WHILE Antioch was from first to last essentially a Greek city, with no important Roman or Oriental elements, BERYTUS, as the principal Roman veteran colony, retained some Italian features.

An old Phoenician seaport with a good harbour, separated from the Lebanon range by a narrow strip of coast land, it lay at the mouth of the Magoras (Nahr Beirut), a short mountain stream, on a site which now forms a suburb of the town of Beirut. The situation is a fine one, with the snow peaks behind lighting up the shore, the lower slopes covered with villages and plantations, and an abundance of water, as indicated by the name of the place, "city of streams" (Beeroth).

Like Byblus, it had been in the possession of an earlier tribe than the Phoenicians, the Giblites,[1] who probably originated at Berytus the worship of the marine deity now only known as Poseidon, who is not easily identifiable with any Phoenician god. Both towns were, however, closely assimilated to the Phoenician civilization. Philo of Byblus narrates that Berytus was assigned by Cronos

[1] *Cf.* Jos. Ant. xiii 5; Ps. lxxxiii. 7; Ezech. xxvii., 9.

not only to Poseidon, but to the Phoenician Cabeiri. Near the city was a grove sacred to Eshmun-Aesculapius, who was also worshipped at Berytus itself;[1] and not far off, at Deir el-Kala, has been found a shrine of the Punic god Baal Marqod, "the lord of dances." This deity, called Balmarcodes in inscriptions of the Roman age, was associated with the Simia whom we meet with at Hierapolis, and who in Latin inscriptions appears as Juno Regina.[2] The language and manners were clearly Phoenician before Greek influences came in under the Seleucidae, and the coinage was of Phoenician weight.

It was a place of some commercial importance, noted for its wine, linen works, and manufacture of purple dye, an industry which may account for its hostility towards Tyre.[3] Several of its merchants, called Poseidoniastae from their divine patron, are found established at Delos in the second century B.C., and in the Roman age there were Berytan merchants in Italy.

In 140 B.C. the city is said to have been destroyed by Tryphon, a Syrian usurper, but it is now generally admitted that Strabo is mistaken in suggesting that it remained in ruins till the time of Augustus. There is, however, some reason for thinking that for a time its name was changed to Laodicea in Phoenice, out of compliment to some member of the Seleucid family, the Semitic name, as in other cases, eventually prevailing.[4] A relic of this period is a leaden tessera or weight, representing the marine emblem of a dolphin pierced by a trident, with the title of a Greek official, *agoranomos*.[5]

In 14 or 15 B.C. Agrippa, realizing the capabilities of the

[1] Strab. xvi. 2, 22; Damasc. *Vit. Isid.* p. 302, ed. Boissonade.
[2] C. I. L. iii. 6674 *seq.* 155; *Rev. Arch.* 1898, i. 34.
[3] Herodian, iii. 1.
[4] *Bull. C. H.* 1911, 433 *seq.*
[5] C. I. Gr. iii. 4531.

place as a "bridle of Lebanon," which was not yet entirely clear of robber tribes, planted a veteran colony drawn from two legions, V. Macedonica and VIII. Augusta. Like many settlements of the age, it received a cumbrous designation, Colonia Julia Augusta Felix, the epithet Julia perhaps pointing to an intended colonization by Caesar. It possessed the *ius Italicum*, and extensive municipal estates across Lebanon in the direction of the sources of the Orontes.[1] It was a garrison town, having in the early empire detachments of the Leg. III. Gallica, and the inhabitants could supply an armed force for the assistance of the legate when needed.[2] The presence of a body of Roman residents also made it a convenient spot for judicial inquiries, as when Saturninus, the governor, presided over a court to inquire into the charges brought by Herod against the sons of Mariamne.[3]

As a harbour it was developed under Augustus, and received a double mole in a crescent form, with towers at each end from which a chain could be stretched, so as to block the entrance. It was greatly adorned by the Jewish kings Herod, Agrippa I., and Agrippa II., who pursued the policy of their ancestor Herod the Great in ingratiating themselves with the Romans by gifts to their colonies. Agrippa I. built a splendid theatre,[4] an amphitheatre, baths, and porticoes, all at lavish expense, and celebrated an inaugural festival, with musical performances in the theatre. On this occasion he collected all the malefactors that could be found in his kingdom, and exhibited seven hundred pairs of gladiators in the amphitheatre.

Agrippa II. provided the colonists with wheat and oil, thus increasing his own unpopularity with the Jews,[5] gave endowments for annual spectacles in the theatre, set up

[1] Strab. xvi. 2, 20. [2] Jos. *Ant.* xvii. 10, 9.
[3] *Ibid.* xvi. 11, 1. [4] *Ibid.* xix. 7, 5. [5] *Ibid.* xx. 9, 4.

many statues, and made the city his favourite residence, removing thither his most valuable possessions. Theatrical entertainments and games in the circus were still famous in the fourth century.[1]

At Berytus, Mucianus, the governor of Syria, held a great meeting of the supporters of Vespasian, to deliberate on the measures to be taken for securing him the empire;[2] and there shortly afterwards many of the Jews captured by Titus were forced to fight with each other as gladiators or against wild beasts in the amphitheatre.[3]

The constitution was that of other colonies, with a senate or *ordo*,[4] chief magistrates, who every five years as quinquennales took the census,[5] and priests of the imperial cult, who superintended the public games. Berytus seems to have been closely associated with Heliopolis, a sister colony of Roman veterans; and the worship of the old Semitic god of that city was widespread among the Berytans settled elsewhere, as at Nemausus in Gaul and Puteoli.[6] Latin inscriptions in and about the town are fairly numerous, and many coins recall its colonial origin by their devices, as that of the priest guiding the two oxen of the plough which marked out the original area of a Roman colony, or legionary eagles between two standards. Other designs include marine deities, usually Poseidon with a trident, or drawn by sea-horses.

Existing remains are scanty, consisting of some fragments of columns and mosaics, rock tombs, and a few sarcophagi. There is also a fine aqueduct.

Early in the third century we have the first reference to the celebrated school of Roman civil law, which assumed the position of a kind of university. Other provincial schools existed at Alexandria, Caesarea in Cappadocia,

[1] *Expositio*, 32. [2] Tac. *H*. ii. 81. [3] Jos. *B. J*. vii. 3 and 5.
[4] C. I. L. iii. 166. [5] Waddington, 1841. [6] C. I. L. x. 1746.

Athens, and perhaps Carthage; but Berytus seems to have enjoyed a primacy. The earliest allusion is in the ecclesiastical writer Gregorius Thaumaturgus,[1] a Cappadocian and disciple of Origen. Writing about A.D. 240, he recalls how he had first learned Latin in his native province, and proceeded to Berytus (where the instruction was doubtless in Latin), "a city of a more Roman type" than those which he had yet known, and "regarded as the true academy of Roman law."

Some historians have even carried back the foundation of the school to Augustus himself, but it is more likely due to one of the Severi, perhaps to Septimius, who had been trained to the law, and was commemorated at Berytus by a temple and statue.[2]

There is reason for thinking that several of the most famous jurists of this period, such as Gaius, Ulpian, and Papinian, were at one time teachers at Berytus; and many Greeks and Asiatics who had devoted themselves to the subject here eventually settled at Rome.[3] Thus the old exclusive Roman law, in the commentaries which they published, became considerably modified by the cosmopolitan principles of the *ius gentium*. Ulpian was himself a native of the neighbouring city of Tyre; Papinian, being a kinsman of Julia Domna, may have belonged to Emesa; Gaius came from Asia Minor.

Such professors or *antecessores* would answer legal questions in addition to their ordinary teaching; and they especially devoted themselves to commentaries on older codes, or the interpretation of passages in the great jurists of the past. This is particularly true of the pro-

[1] *Orat. Paneg. ad Orig.* p. 186, ed. Vossius.

[2] C. I. L. iii. 154.

[3] The evidence is summarized in F. P. Bremer's *Die Rechtslehrer und Rechtsschulen im Röm. Kaiserreich*, 1868, p. 81 *seq.*

fessors of the fourth and fifth centuries, such as Cyrillus, Domninus, Eudoxius, and Patricius, who are quoted as authorities by the jurists of Justinian's age. The legislation of that emperor has several references to the course of study, which was altered in his time; and we learn that students might remain at Berytus undisturbed by civil or military duties till the age of twenty-five.[1]

In the same century a great earthquake wrecked Berytus, destroying most of the ancient buildings, together with many of the students. During the rebuilding the school was removed to Sidon.[2]

Some idea of the life in such a university town, lying on the confines of East and West, at a time when ancient history was passing into mediaeval, may be gained from the biography of Severus, patriarch of Antioch between A.D 512-518, by his fellow-student Zacharias, a native of Gaza.[3]

The two friends, Severus, a native of Pisidia, and Zacharias, had together studied Greek and Latin literature and rhetoric at Alexandria; and from there Severus, then wishing to become an advocate, migrated to Berytus for a course of civil law, followed a year later by Zacharias. The older students, *edictales*, were accustomed to receive new arrivals with ridicule but not actual ill-treatment, in order to test their power of self-control. Thus, when Zacharias first entered the school of the famous teacher Leontius, where Severus and many other auditors were seated, he was somewhat apprehensive, but through his friend's good offices he was good-humouredly received. The *dupondii* or freshmen left when their exercise was over, and Zacharias, who had a strongly religious disposition, went to offer prayer in the church of the Resurrection.

[1] *Cod. Just.* x. 50, 1. [2] Agath. ii. 15.

[3] *Patrol. Orient.* ii. The work was in Greek, but only a Syriac version remains, interlarded with Greek terms.

After this he met Severus outside St. Mary's by the harbour, and begged him to avoid horse-races, *venationes*, theatres, to attend church daily after the lectures, and to abstain from drunkenness and gambling, to which the more disorderly students were prone. The future bishop, while stipulating that, law student as he was, he should not be made a monk of, agreed to do what he could.

The classes lasted most of the day, Saturday afternoons being excepted, and the work done had to be repeated in the course of the evening. Zacharias proposed a society to study the works of Basil, Gregory, and Chrysostom, and he was aided by a certain Evagrius of Samosata, who had formerly been a student at Antioch, but after being wounded in a disturbance had taken a dislike to spectacles. Though obliged by his parents to study law, he, like Zacharias, was of a serious turn, fasted constantly, and only once a year, on Easter Eve, indulged in the luxury of a bath. The club was joined by others, as Anastasius of Edessa, and even by some fourth-year men, and met every evening in the church of the Resurrection under the presidency of Evagrius. Severus was stimulated by these examples of asceticism, and set himself to abstain from meat.

A less desirable society came into existence at the same time. An Egyptian from Thebes, a Thessalonian, an Armenian, a Syrian from Baalbek, and others, took up occultism, collected works on magic, and at last went so far as to plot the murder of a black slave of John the Egyptian. He was to be sacrificed in the circus at midnight to bring influence to bear on demons,[1] and so win for his master the affections of a woman of whom he was enamoured. Some passers-by interrupted the rite, and the negro, escaping in the confusion, informed a Christian

[1] The offering of black animals to infernal powers is familiar from Homeric days, cf. *Odyss.* x. 525.

Egyptian, who communicated with the patristic society. An advocate and a soldier in the prefect's cohort were called into counsel. With some of the students they visited John, and challenged him to produce all his magical works. These were in fact hidden in the lower part of a chair, which was constructed like a box, and he was able to allow a search of his shelves; but on the real place being indicated by a slave, the owner surrendered them to the flames, on condition that he should not be informed against. They were found full of strange names and pictures of demons, some being attributed to Zoroaster, some to Ostanes or Manethon. As a proof of his repentance he was asked to eat meat with the rest, a practice held impure by demon-worshippers.

Further inquiries were, however, set on foot, and a former law student, who had become a priest at St. Jude's and had much influence with the students, was asked for advice. When it was found that the professor Leontius himself was implicated in similar illicit practices, it was decided to give information to the bishop of Berytus. A formal court of inquiry was then set up, consisting partly of clergy, partly of the municipal notaries; and Leontius, with others, was found guilty of drawing up horoscopes, foretelling events such as the results of elections, and thus spreading the tendency to idolatry. Some of the accused fled the city, others tried to rouse disorderly gangs called *hetaeroi*, who were always ready for émeutes; but a threat of arming the neighbouring peasantry led to a capitulation. The books were burned in the presence of the *defensor* of the town, the public notaries, and clergy, in front of St. Mary's, and their titles proved that they claimed to stir up strife within families, to break off marriages, and effect thefts or murders.

Later on a party of vagrant magicians arrived in Berytus,

promising to reveal treasure hidden long ago by Darius of Persia. Two priests connived at excavations being made in the tombs of a church, and in an attempt to evoke demons by the seashore with the help of silver objects, including a censer from the church. The ceremony was cut short by an earthquake, and punishment was visited on the priests, one of whom was confined in a monastery.

DAMASCUS, the past and future capital of Syria, during the Macedonian and Roman ages was somewhat overshadowed by Antioch and other towns nearer the coast and more accessible from Europe. The centre of an important Semitic kingdom in the period of the kings of Israel, it was again the chief city of Syria under Persian rule,[1] and an occasional residence of the Seleucid monarchs, who indeed at one time made it the capital of a small kingdom independent of that of Antioch.

The beauty of the situation is constantly dwelt on by travellers. Julian styles it "the eye of the whole East, in truth the city of Zeus." It lies in an oasis of considerable extent, full of gardens and producing palms, pistachios, apples, plums, and many other fruits. It is enriched by the many streams into which the Chrysorrhoas or Abana, flowing down from Antilibanus, divides before it disappears in the sands. On three sides of this oasis stand mountains of no great altitude, many of them volcanic in origin and honeycombed with caves, which when the Romans first appeared were the constant resorts of Arab brigands. Towards the east stretches the vast sandy steppe, crossed only by caravan routes. In addition to exporting the products of the district, Damascus, from Old Testament times down to the opening of the Suez Canal, was the centre of a vast carrying trade from Babylon and the far

[1] Strab. xvi. 2, 20.

East, from Arabia Felix to the Mediterranean ports, and from Egypt and southern Syria to the Euphrates countries.

The population was of mixed Syrian and Arab origin, reinforced during the Seleucid period by numbers of Greeks and Jews. The latter, in spite of much intermarriage with the other inhabitants, were far from popular, and the occasion of the Jewish revolt under Nero was seized by the Damascenes as an excuse for a massacre of the Hebrew residents.

The political status of Damascus during the first century of Roman rule in Syria is somewhat perplexing. The Romans felt their way into the interior with caution, and shrank from taking over districts which they were incapable of guarding. A rich commercial town, whose possessions extended so far that it was involved in frontier disputes with Sidon,[1] needed efficient protection; and during the decay of the Macedonian power the Damascenes made themselves tributary to the Nabataean king of Petra (85 B.C.). At the time of the formation of the province the city was again independent; Pompey visited it in 64 B.C., and it was for a time garrisoned by his legates. Twenty years later there are again references to Roman governors. In 38 B.C. it was, with much of southern Syria, given by Antony to Cleopatra, who visited the city and had coins struck there. After Antony's fall it reverted to Rome, received gifts, such as a theatre and gymnasium, from Herod, and struck coins with the names of Augustus and Tiberius. Subsequently, whether in virtue of an imperial grant or successful usurpation, the Arab dynasty of Petra revived its claims. A resident ethnarch or governor was maintained, and Roman coinage only recommences about A.D. 63. Damascus was raised to the position of a metropolis under Hadrian, received colonial

[1] Jos. *Ant.* xviii. 6, 3.

rights from Alexander Severus, and in the time of Diocletian an arsenal and magazine, perhaps the first reference to the skill of the inhabitants in forging arms. It was the principal city in the province of Phoenicia Libanesia, formed at the end of the fourth century, and became a barrier of the empire against the Arabs, as well as the seat of a bishop who ranked next in dignity to the patriarch of Antioch.

The mountains of Trachonitis to the south were the cause of constant terror to merchants trading with Damascus, until the brigands were repressed by Roman garrisons. Strabo mentions one cave which could shelter 4,000 men, who were liable to assail the caravans from Arabia Felix. The first step in securing the safety of the route was taken by Herod, who broke up the gang patronized by the Arab chief Zenodorus. The histories of Josephus, however, show that the whole of these eastern tetrarchies were full of lawless tribes, especially before A.D. 70, when the adjoining district of Palestine was put under strict military government. In the time of Trajan the old caravan route to the south, connecting with the Red Sea and Arabia, was changed into a regular military road, and the remaining tetrarchies were absorbed in the empire.

Damascus was among the cities overrun by the Persians in the decline of the Byzantine empire, and after a stout resistance fell to the Arabs in A.D. 635, becoming for a time the seat of their caliphate.

Ruins remain of the large and richly endowed temple of Zeus, which was changed into a church under Theodosius, lying near the great mosque and over the bazaar. It probably belonged to the age of Aurelian, when the Syrian solar deities received much official encouragement. The lower courses of the city wall, of stones jointed without mortar, are also Roman.

The coins of Damascus have a number of types; some

belong to Aretas III., the Nabataean king, who here assumes the title Philhellen. The imperial issues have references to local Olympian games, and to the "rivers of Damascus," on which its prosperity depended. The Chrysorrhoas and the Fountains are thus commemorated as demi-gods, and on some specimens the Fortune of the city is shown personified, seated on a rock, with a river-god at her foot. The legends are usually in Greek, occasionally with some mixture of Latin.

Damascus was an important centre of the worship of Hadad, surnamed Ramman "the thunderer." Of the latter title, to avoid the light use of a sacred name, Rimmon was an intentional perversion, through a change easy in the strongly consonantal Semitic tongues. This deity, as Jupiter Damascenus, was carried by merchants to great distances. Thus, at Misenum in Italy, Eutychianus, a priest "of Jupiter Optimus Maximus of Damascus," is commemorated as having held equestrian rank and sat on the local senate of Puteoli.[1] The god's consort was Atargatis.[2] On Seleucid coins of Damascus the god is accompanied by two bulls; the goddess stands veiled with outstretched arms, long bands hanging from her head-dress, and a sheath-like covering is shown, resembling that of the god of Heliopolis.

While the remains of HELIOPOLIS and Palmyra are the most interesting of any Syrian towns, the former place, unlike the latter, plays no great part in recorded history. At Heliopolis, far more than at Antioch or Berytus, the Oriental element prevailed over the Graeco-Roman.

[1] C. I. L. x. 1576; *cf.* vi. 1407, where a veteran dedicated to the god a column surmounted by a cone across the Tiber at Rome.

[2] *Cf. Et. Mag. s.v.* Damascus, where it is stated that the legendary founder Damas set up there a statue of the Syrian goddess; also Just. 36, 2, who says that in his honour the Syrians made the grave of his wife an object of worship as if it had been a temple.

The ruined city stands in a high valley near the source of the Leontes, its native name of Baalbek being said to signify "the height of the vale." The place is healthy, 3,850 feet above sea-level, and well supplied with water, but subject to piercing winds. Lebanon and Antilibanus rise on either hand, and over the latter a caravan road led to Damascus, while the town was also on the route from Egypt and the Red Sea to northern Syria and Asia Minor.

In the chaos which preceded the Roman occupation Heliopolis had come into the power of the Arab chief Ptolemy, son of Mennaeus, king of Chalcis under Lebanon; and it is uncertain at what date it finally passed to the Romans. Augustus or Agrippa realized, as in the case of Berytus, that the town was well placed for keeping a check on neighbouring mountain tribes, and planted a garrison there from the same legions as those used to colonize Berytus. What their status was at first is unknown, but colonial rights were clearly granted early in the empire, for inscriptions refer to a king Agrippa (either Herod Agrippa I. or Agrippa II.) and Sohaemus, king of Ituraea (who was instituted by Caligula), as patrons of the *Colonia Julia Heliopolitana*.[1]

Imperial coins range from Nerva to Gallienus, and are fairly numerous, the earlier showing a colonist and oxen, the later the sun temple with the god in his chariot in front, or a standing figure of the Fortune of the city.

The Latin inscriptions, as might be expected in a military colony, are more numerous than in other Syrian towns.[2] Many of the recent finds are from the great sun temple, and contain dedications to the local deities, here called Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury, and to the Phoenician lord of dancing, Balmarcodes. One commemorates a worker in lead who offered statues of the sun and moon,

[1] C. I. L. iii. 14387.

[2] *Ibid.* 14385 *seq.*

with a gilt figure of Victory between, for the safety of the emperor.

Besides the royal patrons already mentioned, there are references to many civil and military officials—the *duoviri* who as *quinquennales* took the census, a centurion who when the emperor Nero was elected a duovir acted as his deputy or prefect, an officer who had distinguished himself in the war connected with the deposition of the last king of Commagene under Vespasian, and a priest of the local Baal who was an honorary member of the senate of the place. Over the great portico a Latin inscription[1] states that brazen pillars had been dedicated and the capitals gilt in honour of Caracalla and his mother by a *speculator* of the first Antoninian legion.

In spite of the Roman element in the population the habits of the citizens were more eastern than European. The women were noted for their beauty, which was believed to be bestowed by the favour of the Syrian goddess who haunted the neighbouring slopes of Lebanon.[2] Flute-players, whose services would be needed in the ritual of the numerous temples, were famous, and often met with in other parts of the empire. All the inhabitants, the same anonymous geographer continues, had a pleasing address and eloquence, inspired by the Muses of their mountain district. Darker traits are not, however, wanting, and it was not till the age of Constantine that the empire succeeded in suppressing the immorality which, as in many Semitic centres, lurked under the shadow of the great shrine.[3] Even then such interference was resented, and by way of reprisals many nuns were cruelly treated by the inhabitants in the reaction under Julian. The chief public games were called *oecumenica iselastica*.

[1] C. I. L. iii. 138. [2] *Expositio*, 30.
[3] Socr. i. 18; Eus. *Vit. Const.* iii. 58; Sozom. v. 10.

From very early days Baalbek had clearly been a great religious centre, round a temple of the weather and fertility god Hadad. Associated with him were his consorts Atargatis or Venus, and a more shadowy figure who appears as Mercury in Roman times. As Greek and Babylonian views spread over central Syria in the Seleucid era, the chief god was more definitely identified with the sun, and the title of the city was changed to Heliopolis, which, however, never definitely superseded the Semitic name. The worship of the deity prevailed very extensively over Syria, and under the title of Jupiter Heliopolitanus was carried by many merchants and soldiers to Europe, where finds of images prove that the girlish face of the Syrian thunderer, with its long curls, was familiar in many provinces. At Heliopolis his temple was the seat of a famous oracle.[1] The statue was carried on a litter by the leading inhabitants, who had previously practised long abstinence and shaved their heads. The direction to be taken by the procession was signified by the divine spirit, which thereby conveyed the answer to be given to inquirers. The oracle could be consulted in writing, and the answer be dictated by the god. Trajan, when he came to Antioch for the Parthian expedition from which he was never to return, decided to consult the oracle: and, in order to test the insight of the divine power, first sent a sealed sheet of blank paper, to which the oracle ordered an answer to be sent in like form. He next caused the question to be asked whether he should ever return to Rome, when the deity directed that a centurion's staff which was dedicated in the temple should be cut up and the pieces covered in a napkin. After the event this was taken to mean that only the emperor's bones should go back to Italy, but it would not have been difficult to make

[1] Macrob. i. 23.

it fit quite different cases. Another oracle of somewhat later date shows that the god had adopted the hexameter measure and half-humorous turns of the old Greek shrines.[1] Some pillars which were being shipped to Syria for use in the temple had been shipwrecked, but afterwards recovered and kept at Berytus. Here Poseidon is bidden to obey his elder brother and restore them, lest his waters be all dried up, " for not even the sea can quench the bolt of Zeus."

The architecture of the surviving group of buildings, which belong principally to the second and third centuries, is of great interest; but they are more purely Greek than those of east Syrian towns of a somewhat later date. The chief Oriental features are the colossal size of pillars and stone blocks and the wealth of detail and figure-work in the friezes and other parts. Thus we find wheat and poppies combined, the symbols of life and death, winged genii lifting a veil, Cupids hunting with bows and arrows, or mounted on dragons or dolphins—miniature figures hardly more than an inch long. Hexagons enclose figures of gods and goddesses; lintels show bird or animal figures, as the group in the Bacchus temple, where an eagle holds a *caduceus* in its claws, in its beak long garlands, the ends of which are held by genii. Vines and garlands adorn the doorposts, ceilings are covered with geometrical figures, interspersed with foliage and busts of emperors or gods. Wall spaces are diversified by tiers of niches, often of a shell pattern, surmounted by pediments, and divided longitudinally by Corinthian pillars.

The principal group or Acropolis, which survived the destruction of the town by the Mongolians, stands on an artificial platform, built out on solid arches where a hill meets the plain, and visible at a great distance. The vast-

[1] *Anth. Pal.* xiv. 75.

ness of the blocks used may have been designed to secure the stability of the building in case of earthquake. Beneath this is a series of vaults, some apparently once used as shops and having openings to the road below.

At the east end of the group a flight of steps, now ruined, led up to a wide portico or propylaea, flanked by two towers. Through this a hexagonal vestibule was reached, surrounded by colonnades, and having mosaic flooring and a series of chambers opening from it, probably once the residence of the priests.

A triple doorway beyond leads to the Great Court, 147 by 123 yards, or half as large again as the great quadrangle of Christ Church, Oxford. This seems to have been a place of assembly and judgment, and had colonnades of polished granite columns on each of three sides, square or semicircular *exedrae* opening from them, and elaborate mural decoration of pilasters and niches, beneath some of which project stone seats with names inscribed on the edge. Two stone basins stood not far from a colossal altar, which adjoined the great flight of steps leading up to the sun temple at the west end. One of these lavers remains, with beautifully carved panels. In the western half of this court a Christian church with three apses was built in the time of Theodosius. The sun temple itself, which is surrounded by a terrace resting on huge stones, is in a very fragmentary condition; the chief remains are six huge columns of yellow stone, over 60 feet high, with Corinthian capitals and a frieze above. To the south of this, on a separate terrace and lacking a forecourt, is the Bacchus temple, perhaps the best preserved and most richly ornamented building in Syria. It had a peristyle of Corinthian columns, supporting an entablature which was connected with the cella, or shrine, by huge stone beams, forming a ceiling. On one side a vestibule is

formed by a second row of columns and a projection in the walls of the cella. The finest feature is the portal, with rich foliage and figure work, as of Satyrs and Bacchantes, and Bacchus suckled by the Nymphs; while over the side doors a frieze represents a Bacchic procession. Stairs within led to the *adytum*, in which the principal statue of the god was displayed, and the walls which enclose them show carvings of Bacchus and various Bacchantes and Maenads.

A circular temple of Venus, with a straight façade and interior ornament of tiers of niches, stands outside the acropolis group to the south-east; and there are also traces of town walls, and on an adjoining hill a single Doric column commemorating some event now unknown.

The late historian Joannes Malalas[1] relates that Antoninus Pius built the principal shrine of Zeus or the sun-god, and it does not appear on the local coinage before Severus. There must, however, have been several successive shrines on the same spot, and the substructures may date back to the Seleucid age, or even earlier. The temple was probably begun early in the empire, and progressed slowly to the time of Caracalla, with intermittent additions later. Under Theodosius it was wrecked, and the church constructed out of the materials, while the ruins of other adjoining buildings have been used for Arab walls, baths, and the shrine o ía Moslem saint.

About the middle course oí the Orontes lay the fertile vine-covered plain called, in virtue of its position between the river and a large lake, the Syrian Chersonese. Here on a hill stood the city of APAMEA, which, like other Syrian towns, underwent several changes of title. Once a native town called Pharnace, it was refounded by Antigonus as

[1] 280.

a Macedonian colony, named from the capital of his native country Pella. After the fall of Antigonus it passed to Seleucus, who gave it the name of his first wife, Apama, and regarded it as one of the chief towns in his Syrian dominions. The neighbourhood was rich in pasturage, and royal parks full of game were laid out. The town became the military headquarters of the Seleucid monarchy; war horses and elephants were kept here, bodies of Thessalian horsemen, the staff of the army and officers for training recruits, and the military treasury. Several smaller towns were also reckoned as forming part of Apamea, and their inhabitants were probably reckoned in to make up the total of 117,000 free persons[1] enumerated under Augustus in the census of Quirinius. Here Demetrius Poliorcetes, the dethroned king of Macedonia, ended his days in honourable captivity (283 B.C.).

It was taken possession of by Pompey, who destroyed the citadel,[2] but the position, nearly surrounded by the river, was so strong that after the battle of Pharsalus the Pompeian leader Caecilius Bassus maintained himself for three years against various Caesarean commanders.[3] Though not often referred to in the Roman age, its remains show it to have been a rich and important town, and it even claimed to be a rival of Antioch.[4] Many Roman roads in the district date from about the time of Trajan, and must have helped to develop trade.

Apamea was the seat of a Neoplatonist school of some importance in the third century, founded by Amelius on the invitation of Zenobia and Longinus; his successor Sopater was put to death by the Roman government under Constantine. Earlier natives were the well-known

[1] *Eph. Epigr.* iv. 537. [2] Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 3.
[3] *Ibid.* xiv. 11; Cic. *ad Fam.* xii. 12; Dio. C. xlvii. 26.
[4] Dio. Chrys. *Or.* 34.

Stoic philosopher and historian Posidonius, and the physician Archigenes, who is several times referred to by Juvenal[1] as a favourite practitioner at Rome in his own day, especially for mental cases. Archigenes belonged to the eclectic school, and produced several medical works, one of which, on the pulse, was commented on by Galen.

The chief god was the solar deity Zeus Belus, probably the same as the Malakhbel of Palmyra. A famous oracle existed in the great temple, which was destroyed under Theodosius, and has not been certainly identified. The historian[2] describes it as strongly built with large stones fastened with iron or lead, surrounded by a colonnade, the columns of vast size, sixteen cubits round, and of very hard stone. When the order for demolition came these were undermined, and underpinned with wooden props, which were then set on fire. They refused, however, to burn, and the excited bystanders imagined that a black demon was interfering on behalf of the pagan shrine, especially as after holy water had been sprinkled the destruction was completed. The inhabitants of this district were among the last Syrians to cling to paganism. They called in peasants from Galilee and Lebanon to guard their temples, and Marcellus, bishop of Apamea, while his followers were assailing a heathen shrine in the neighbourhood, was set upon by the rustics and killed.[3]

Early in the fifth century Apamea appears as a provincial capital, the area of *Syria secunda* or *salutaris*, which also included Epiphania, Arethusa, and Seleucia ad Belum, having been cut off from the Antioch district. In the Persian invasion of A.D. 540 Apamea, unlike Antioch, escaped comparatively lightly. After sealing the fate of its ancient rival, Chosroes came on to Apamea, where the

[1] vi. 239; xiii. 98; xiv. 252.
[2] Theodoret, v. 21.
[3] Sozom. vii. 15.

chief solicitude of the inhabitants was about a piece of the true cross. This was used as an amulet, kept in a wooden case covered with gold and jewels, under the care of three priests, and only brought out to be worshipped once a year. On the news of the king's approach the bishop unfastened the case, when a miraculous light shone over it and rose up to the roof of the church, but disappeared as soon as it was shut. Chosroes entered the city unopposed, and consented to leave the relic, but took away the jewelled case and the other treasure of the cathedral.

He then ordered chariot-races to be run in the hippodrome for his amusement, and knowing that his rival, the emperor Justinian, favoured the Blue faction, gave his support to the Green. On the Blue charioteer arriving first, he insisted that the race should be run again, and the hostile driver was instructed to hold in his steeds.[1]

Thirty years later the Persian Adarnas, a general of the same Chosroes, in a renewed war with the Romans, burnt down Apamea, and it ceased to be of any importance. It was again occupied by the Persians early in the reign of Heraclius,[2] and fell to the Arabs soon after the capture of Caesarea.

Both autonomous and imperial coins exist, with heads of Zeus, Pallas, Dionysus, or the city, and such reverse designs as Victory, the Bacchic thyrsus, and an elephant.

The oracle attained its chief celebrity under the Antonines and Severi, a period when the Syrian temples were particularly active, but the methods used are unknown. It was probably the Bel of Apamea who foretold the greatness of Julia Domna, and he also encouraged the designs of Septimius Severus while still in a private station by comparing his form and bearing to those of a number of divini-

[1] Procop. *B. Pers.* ii. 11. [2] Theophanes, p. 299.

ties.[1] A second visit of Severus when already emperor was less fortunate; "thy whole house," said the sun-god, "shall go through blood," a prophecy soon fulfilled by the violent deaths of all the emperor's descendants. To the African usurper Macrinus the Syrian priests were far from complimentary; adapting Homeric language to the circumstances of their young countrymen Elagabalus and Alexander, they replied:

> "Old man, the youthful warriors press thee sore,
> Thy strength is loosed, and toilsome age comes on."[2]

We also find dedications to Bel set up, with the usual fidelity of Syrians to their old home, by Apamene merchants in the far West. Thus an altar found at Vaison, in the south of France, has elegiac couplets in Greek and Latin, recording how Sextus set it up to "Bel the director of fortune" in memory of oracular responses at Apamea.[3]

The principal ruins stand on a broad plateau, to the east of the modern village of Kalat el-Mudik, which occupies the acropolis hill. They belong chiefly to the second century A.D.[4] There are considerable parts of the fortifications, and traces of the acropolis, which stood on a hill sloping down to the lake, and was joined by walls to the city ramparts. Portions of three gates exist, the northerly a dipylon with massive towers. Through the city from north to south ran a great colonnaded avenue, nearly a mile long, its walls having openings to shops and houses, as at Antioch and other Syrian towns. The columns are of white limestone, 30 feet high, in the Corinthian style, with much variety both in the shafts and capitals, which are adorned with flowers and fruit. The side-walks were roofed over, as at Palmyra and Antioch. Near the centre a portico opened into a large basilica surrounded by a

[1] Dion C. 78, 8. [2] *Ibid.* 78, 40. [3] *Philologus*, 31, 362.
[4] Butler *Amer. Arch. Exp.* i. 285.

colonnaded court; and there still exists the substructure of an important temple in the Corinthian style. There are also some reliefs and pieces of statuary of the Roman period, the best a relief of Bacchus holding the thyrsus, with a vine-tree and grape-clusters behind him.

SIDON, the former head of the Phoenician confederation, never thoroughly recovered from the fearful punishment which it received when its revolt against the old Persian empire was suppressed (351 B.C.). Its fortifications were then destroyed, and it lost all military importance.

The harbour was, however, convenient, and in the Roman age Sidonian merchants did a considerable trade in goods from the interior, besides exporting the glass and metal work for which the artificers were famous.

It lay on the north-western slope of a promontory, and the harbour was formed by low ridges, with narrow openings between them, parallel to the shore in front of the town. South of the promontory was a large bay, and the inland suburbs were fertile and full of flowers, especially along the banks of the river Bostrenus.

Greek influence had begun before the Macedonian conquest. A native king is called *Philhellen* about 400 B.C.,[1] and the Sidonian skill in statuary seems due to imitation of the Greek style. Like Tyre, the city had obtained its freedom under the later Seleucidae, and with certain modifications this was confirmed by Rome. It retained its archons, senate, and assembly, but paid certain dues, and the aristocracy was kept in power by the enforcement of a high census. In 40 B.C. it was occupied by the Parthians, and after its recovery by the Republic it was excepted by Antony from his grant of southern Syria to Cleopatra. It seems to have remained attached to his cause, and early in the reign of Augustus some disturbances

[1] C. I. Gr. 87.

took place which resulted in a temporary loss of freedom. The colony of Berytus may have been partly designed to keep a check on the larger Phoenician towns, and for a time a detachment of the third Gallic legion was stationed at Sidon itself. Colonial rights were conferred by Elagabalus.

It was a place of considerable learning as well as commercial activity. Strabo refers to its proficiency in astronomy and mathematics, the former of which he attributes to the frequent night voyages of the Phoenician mariners, the latter to the need felt by merchants for ready means of calculation. It also at this time produced many philosophers, and at a much earlier date the atomic theory is said to have been formulated here. Sidon holds an important place in church history, as the seat of a bishop and the scene of an ecclesiastical council early in the fifth century.

In religion the town had been a centre of Astarte worship, with an important temple; her paredros the Baal of Sidon seems to have had no special title. Eshmun or Asclepius was also worshipped, an agrarian deity corresponding closely to the Adonis of Byblus.

The ancient remains are scanty. There are foundations of a Phoenician city wall with Roman superstructures on the promontory, but no trace of the portion of the city which lay on the mainland in a plain fertilized by the Bostrenus. A cemetery has, however, been excavated to the east of the present town, and some of the vaulted grottoes there used as tombs belong to the Roman age. They contain terra-cotta vases, much-damaged wall-paintings, and sarcophagi carved with garlands and other reliefs. One of these, shown by the inscription to commemorate the gymnasiarch Gerostratus,[1] has a figure of

[1] Harris, *Interesting Syr. and Pal. Inscr.* 27.

Silenus, winged quadrupeds, and figures holding out leaves. Other tombs belong to the age of Phoenician independence, the grottoes being rectangular and reached by perpendicular shafts, the sarcophagi cut so as exactly to fit the shape of the body.

Throughout the Roman empire TYRE was one of the leading commercial cities of the East. A fourth-century geographer mentions the density of its population and the wealth and activity of its merchants, an activity surpassing that of all Oriental towns. The exports were partly goods from the far East, partly the dyed stuffs and wine produced in the district.[1]

The dam constructed by Alexander during his siege of Tyre still united the island, on which a great part of the town lay, with the mainland; but the island was so small that the inhabitants were much crowded, and built houses of so many stories as to constitute a real danger in the frequent event of an earthquake.[2] The cauldrons, too, in which the numerous dyers boiled their purple fish, made the place, Strabo suggests, a less attractive residence than other towns along the Phoenician coast.

The inland views, which embrace Hermon and several other mountains, are very beautiful, and the outlook from the city over the two harbours, the Sidonian, or northerly, and the Egyptian to the south of the isthmus, must have been a striking one.

Pompey's legate, M. Aemilius Scaurus, is referred to in an inscription as patron of Tyre, and probably through his agency the Tyrians bought the retention of the privileges

[1] *Cf.* Asterius *Hom.* i. *οἶνου τοῦ Φοίνικος ὃν αἱ ἄμπελοι* Τύρου *πολὺν τοῖς πλουσίοις καὶ τίμιον ἀπορρέουσι.*

[2] Sen. *N. Q.* vi. 1, 13, Tyros aliquando infamis ruinis fuit; Luc. iii. 217.

granted them by the Seleucidae.[1] Whether the treaty which raised Tyre to the rank of a federate state, and of which the citizens are described by Ulpian as so proud, belongs to the same age, is unknown.[2]

In 40 B.C. it was the only important place to hold out in the Parthian invasion of Syria. Under Hadrian it acquired metropolitan rights, and, after suffering severely from the barbarian troops in the service of Pescennius Niger, was rewarded by Severus with the *ius Italicum* and the title of colony. It was at the same time recruited in population with veterans of the *Leg. iii. Gallica*, which had long been in Syria, and at this time was stationed at Phaena in Trachonitis.

Tyre now became the capital of the new province of Phoenice, the chief seat of the common assembly of that province, and the ordinary residence of the Phoenicarch, or imperial priest who presided over it. After the further subdivision of Phoenice, Tyre retained the headship of the maritime portion, and continued important through the Arab and Crusading periods. Indeed Jerome,[3] writing in the fourth century, has a difficulty in reconciling the state of this *Phoenices nobilissima et pulcherrima civitas*, in which *omnium propemodum gentium exercentur negotia*, with the prophecy of Ezekiel, " I will make thee like the top of a rock, thou shalt be built no more."

The piratical attacks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at length fulfilled the words of the Hebrew prophet. The inhabitants were carried away into slavery, and the buildings became quarries for other coast towns. The present village of Sur occupies the site of the north-west corner of the city, which even in Pliny's time measured less

[1] Strab. xvi. 2, 23; Renan, *Mission*, 533.

[2] *Cf.* C. I. L. x. 1601 (at Puteoli), Tyros metropolis foederata.

[3] *Ad Ez.* xxvi.

than three miles round, and of which the southern portion is now under water. The dam is covered with sand, and the ancient remains are very slight.

Roman statues and other fragments are come upon from time to time, and a number of columns of Egyptian granite perhaps belonged to the colonnaded forum which Diocletian had rebuilt in honour of Heracles-Melcarth, the patron of his colleague Herculius Maximianus.[1]

A temple, magazine, and other works were constructed by Herod, and the temple of the tutelary god of the city, Melcarth or Baal Sur, was one of the most famous in Syria. The site is unknown, but it was probably in the centre of the island, not far from the chief Christian basilica. The worship of this fire-god was carried by the Tyrians to Carthage, Gades and other western colonies, where he was usually identified either with Saturn or Hercules. His consort was Astarte. On local coins he is sometimes seated on a sea-horse; and though the presence of a large Greek element in the population had a softening influence on the cult, and there are no references to the burning of human victims in Roman times (a custom which lasted far into the empire at Carthage), the worship of Melcarth was not easily eradicated, and still resisted the spread of Christianity in Phoenicia in the time of Chrysostom. In the earlier period there seems to have been at Tyre an annual ceremony of burning the effigy of Melcarth, perhaps in substitution for the primitive sacrifice of a priest or king, in whom the god was incarnate.

Another important temple, known to the Greeks as that of Zeus Olympius, probably the same as Baalsamin, stood on a promontory, once a separate island, but joined to Tyre by king Hiram, the friend of Solomon.[2] In the Christian period the basilica constructed by Paulinus,

[1] Renan, *Mission*, 540. [2] Jos. *C. Apion*. i. 17.

at the consecration of which the historian Eusebius was present, formed one of the marvels of Syria.

Several persons of distinction were natives of Tyre; the poet Antipater and Maximus the rhetorician, described below; Ulpian, jurist and statesman, and Porphyry the Neoplatonist; Marinus, a scientific geographer of the second century, who was regarded as the first to substitute maps mathematically drawn according to latitude and longitude for those merely based on itineraries; and Adrianus, the rhetorician and philosopher who taught at Athens and Rome in the Antonine age. The famous theologian Origen spent his last days at Tyre, and his grave is still pointed out as that of a great magician Oriunus, in which magical works are concealed.

Though Tyre is generally looked upon as an industrial state, it had an agricultural suburban area on the main-land, and the numerous troughs, presses, hand-mills, etc., which have been discovered suggest that these villages remained prosperous down to the Arab conquest.

CHAPTER VI

THE RISE AND FALL OF PALMYRA. DIOCLETIAN

Palmyra urbs nobili situ, divitiis soli et aquis amoenis, vasto undique ambitu arenis includit agros, ac veluti terris exempta a rerum natura privata inter duo imperia, summa est prima in discordia utrorumque cura.—PLINY.

PALMYRA, or, as the natives called it, Tadmor, lay in a well-watered basin enclosed by two converging lines of hills. Round these stretched the great desert separating Coele Syria from Mesopotamia; and Palmyra formed a natural link between these countries, as a halting-place for caravans travelling from the Persian Gulf, from the neighbourhood of Babylon, or the further East, towards Damascus or Emesa, and so to the Mediterranean ports. The population was partly Aramaean, partly Arab, with a certain Persian element, as shown by personal names in the inscriptions. Unlike Syrian towns nearer the coast, Palmyra made a general use of Aramaic for official and business purposes, but Greek was understood by the commercial classes, and frequently occurs side by side with Aramaic in the inscriptions. A considerable number of Greeks and Jews were settled here in the time of the empire.

The constitution at this period resembled that of an ordinary Greek city state, and the titles of officials recorded in inscriptions are Greek. There was a senate, presided over by a *proedros*, a popular assembly, tribes, one of which took

its name from the emperor Claudius,[1] chief magistrates called archons, and *decaprotoi* or financial officers, probably chosen by the local senate. Syndics controlled the letting out of taxes, and other officials were the town clerk, and a *logistes* who exercised some financial control. The Oriental and Roman elements were represented respectively by the *epimeletes* or supervisor of the sacred warm spring of Ephka, and the *juridicus*. The former functionary was usually appointed by the city, but it appears that the god Yaribol, to whom the spring was dedicated, might, by means of his oracle, nominate a special candidate.[2] The *juridicus*, probably an imperial nominee, settled disputes between aliens, or between merchants and tax-farmers.[3] As in other muncipalities the magistrates had to go to considerable expense in the public interest. Thus we read of a *logistes* rebuilding the roof of a portico, and the town clerk restoring the temple of Zeus under Hadrian. Distributions of corn and oil according to tickets in the Roman fashion are alluded to, and several citizens were numbered among the equestrian or senatorial orders at Rome.

Yet the Semitic tendency to monarchy could not altogether be suppressed, and a single Arab family enjoyed a virtual supremacy which, in the decadence in Roman power which manifested itself in the second half of the third century, raised Palmyra to the rank of capital for all the eastern provinces. The title given to the leading member of this family from about the time of Severus was merely *syncleticus* or senatorial, and though he was nominated by the emperor he seems to have acted for life, and his position was virtually hereditary, as Zosimus points out.

[1] Waddington, 2613.

[2] *Cf. Rev. Arch.* 1900, i. 126; *Bull. C. H.*, vi. 439; Waddington, 2571C.

[3] *Cf.* Waddington, 2606A; *Hermes*, xix. 486 *seq.*

The first reference to Palmyra in Roman history is in connection with Antony's rule in Syria.[1] On the pretext that the citizens did not side definitely enough with the Republic in the struggle with Parthia, but really in the hope of enriching his men without expense to himself, he sent a body of horsemen to assail this rich commercial city. Being warned in time, the Palmyrenes carried off their valuables across the Euphrates, guarding the banks with troops of archers, which formed their most serviceable arm. The marauders occupied the deserted town, but, on finding nothing worth taking, abandoned it. This and the other high-handed acts of Antony helped to promote another Parthian inroad.

In the early empire Palmyra remained independent of both Roman and Parthian rule, and in case of war each power hastened to assure itself of the city for the time being. However references in inscriptions to trade regulations made by Germanicus under Tiberius, and the military measures taken by Corbulo in the district, show that even then the Romans were not disposed to leave neighbouring states complete autonomy. It was incorporated in the province under Trajan, and was visited by Hadrian,[2] on which occasion a citizen, Males Agrippa, celebrated games, sacrificed in the temple, and entertained the Roman troops. As the city took the title Adriana from him, it is possible that Hadrian conferred the *ius Italicum* or some other definite privilege. At the same period forts were constructed, and military roads laid out, both towards the Euphrates and southwards to Bostra, guarded by outposts supplied from the garrison of Bostra.

About the time of Severus or Caracalla Palmyra received colonial rights, and some of the Greek magistrates gave place to others with Roman titles, such as *duoviri* and

[1] App. *B. C.* v. 10. [2] C. I. Gr. 4482.

aediles. It also became an important starting-point for expeditions against the Parthians, as in the expedition of Alexander, and was garrisoned by a body of horsemen.[1]

The city formed a centre for a number of dependent villages and of semi-nomad tribes, who supplied the native cavalry and archers that formed the strength of the Palmyrene army in the third century. These Arabs were frequently hired by the imperial government, and stationed in far remote parts of the empire. The citizens themselves were rich and luxurious, wearing, as their monuments show, richly jewelled robes, and affecting a highly ornate architecture, enriched with paintings and mosaics.

The priesthood was influential, the temples well provided with servants. The composite character of the people is reflected in their religion, which has Arab, Syrian, and Mesopotamian features, and several parallel deities with similar functions, evidently derived from different tribes. The chief solar power was Malakhbel, a Mesopotamian god, while Yaribol, the oracular lord of the fount Ephka, had more of a local character. Besides these there are often mentioned the lunar god Aglibol; and Allat (Arab), Astarte (Phoenician), Atargatis (Syrian), Athena (Greek), all apparently identified; further, the Arab heavenly twins, or morning and evening star, Azizus and Arsus (elsewhere called Monimus), and Baalsamin, 'the lord of heaven,' who also appears among the Phoenicians and Nabataeans. Whatever might be the teaching of the mystics, the populace inclined to regard such figures as more or less powerful separate gods, and (though from quite different causes) the religion of Palmyra, more than that of other non-Greek towns of Syria, approached to the polytheism of the Greeks and Romans.

It was mentioned in a previous chapter that Odenathus,

[1] Waddington, 2580; C. I. Gr. 4483.

the hereditary prince of Palmyra, fell a victim to a plot contrived by his nephew Maeonius (A.D. 267). His son by a former wife, Herodes, perished with him, and his consort Septimia Zenobia was suspected, apparently without much probability, of instigating the murder. Maeonius, though proclaimed emperor by his followers, was unpopular with the army, owing to his luxury; and when news reached Emesa that Zenobia was acknowledged as queen at Palmyra he was soon despatched.

Roman writers speak of this remarkable woman with an enthusiasm rarely shown by them for a defeated enemy. Though Arab in descent and name (for Zenobia is a mere hellenizing of the Arabic Bath-Zabbai, 'daughter of the merchant'), and coming forward as the champion of the East against Rome, she had no wish to identify her cause with mere barbarism. She claimed some connection with the royal family of the Ptolemies, encouraged Greek literary men, such as the famous philosopher Longinus, and showed sufficient interest in the religion of the numerous Jews settled at Palmyra to be referred to as a Jewess by some later writers. In addition to the vernacular Greek and Aramaic, she was acquainted with Latin and native Egyptian, and had written a short work on Oriental history. She had her sons well trained in Latin, as became members of an imperial family, though not sufficiently fluent in its use to speak it herself.

In appearance she was somewhat dark, with pearly teeth and flashing black eyes; with a clear and melodious voice, and an air of mingled grace and severity. Of a hardy and athletic frame, she was devoted to hunting, would accompany her armies on foot for miles together, and preferred riding to driving. In the internal administration due economy was shown; for, though a large trade was carried on, the natural resources of the state were of moderate

extent, and there was little scope for agriculture. Yet the court was a splendid one, modelled on that of the kings of Persia. Jewelled gold vases were in use,[1] of the kind associated with the name of Cleopatra, gorgeous hangings, and stuffs dyed with a vermilion Indian dye which the Romans were unable to imitate. The state carriages were rich with gold, silver, and gems, and the queen herself wore a purple-fringed robe studded with jewels, together with the helmet of a Roman emperor.

Her eldest son, Wahballathus or Athenodorus, was assumed to have succeeded to all the authority which the Romans had granted to his father, and he became with Zenobia a joint ruler of the East. The Palmyrene empire now extended over part of Asia Minor and almost all Syria, even Antioch having in its Sabellian bishop Paul a representative of the queen, and, as seems probable, striking the coins of Wahballathus which bear a Latin legend. The next project was the subjection of Egypt, a country with which Palmyra had had commercial relations from very early times, and one where the native element was tending to supersede the Graeco-Roman at a faster rate even than in Syria.

Apparently still acting in the name of the empire—for the new emperor Claudius was too much embarrassed with Gothic wars to interfere—Zabdas, the Palmyrene general, marched into Egypt with 70,000 men, dispossessed a usurper Probatus who had appeared there, and garrisoned Alexandria, where a series of coins with Greek inscriptions was issued in the names of the Syrian rulers.

In A.D. 270 Aurelian succeeded to the imperial throne, and he, too, was for a time obliged to bear with these self-appointed colleagues in the East. Alexandrine coins of A.D. 270-271 have portraits both of Wahballathus and Aurelian, the former with the Greek equivalents of *consularis*

[1] *Cf.* Cic. Verr. ii. 4, 27 for Syrians' fondness for jewelled goblets of gold.

and *imperator*; while some Syrian milestones give the names of the emperor and of Zenobia Augusta in juxtaposition.

It was, however, clear that, when the troubles in the West were once settled, the Roman government would find it impossible to overlook the encroachments of the Palmyrene dynasty. Coins of the prince began to appear with the titles Caesar or Augustus, and without Aurelian's effigy. The city was surrounded with fortresses and much beautified; the passage of the Euphrates was secured by the erection of a fortified town named after the queen [1]; foreign alliances were formed, as with Victoria, the rebel queen in Gaul; and governors favourable to the dynasty were set up in the chief towns of Syria.

Nevertheless Palmyra was too remote to be a suitable capital for an Asiatic empire. Its prosperity depended on the friendship of the surrounding peoples, and it had not the prestige of Antioch or any of the great Seleucid towns. The Graeco-Syrian aristocrats of the West looked on the inhabitants and their Arab auxiliaries as half barbarians, and, though not caring for the risk of open resistance, readily acquiesced in the reconquest by Rome.

In A.D. 271, in order to forestall attack from the emperor, it was resolved to attempt the occupation of western Asia Minor, for which purpose some of the Palmyrene troops were withdrawn from Egypt. The result was unfavourable. The Romans, under the future emperor Probus, recovered Egypt, and in Asia, though Tyana and Ancyra fell to the Syrians, Chalcedon held out. On the approach of an imperial army they were obliged to retire. Aurelian now crossed into Asia Minor (A.D. 272), recovered Ancyra, and, after some severe fighting, Tyana. In Syria Seleucia seems to have remained faithful throughout, and a fleet from Egypt co-operated with Aurelian's army. Even where the

[1] Procop. *B. Pers.* ii. 5.

feeling of the people was against the Romans, the cause of Zenobia began to lose ground, as evinced by the unfavourable reponses of the local oracles.

After a slight cavalry skirmish the emperor succeeded in occupying Antioch, which was evacuated by the queen and Zabdas. The citizens were in sympathy with Rome, and were mildly treated by Aurelian. The small Palmyrene garrison of Daphne was also dislodged, the Romans locking their shields in the "tortoise" formation while storming the heights.

After a short stay at Antioch Aurelian advanced towards Emesa, whither the Syrians had retreated in the vain hope of Persian assistance. The Romans consisted chiefly of Illyrian levies, together with some Moorish and Dalmatian cavalry, and a body of club-men from Palestine.[1] Their cavalry was inferior to the *clibanarii* or heavily armed Arab horsemen of the queen,[2] provided as they were with Persian suits of mail. The Palmyrene infantry was, however, made up to a large extent of lightly armed archers; and when the cavalry had been drawn off by a feigned retreat on the part of the Romans, the rest of the army was overcome without much difficulty. Zenobia, who realized that the Emesenes were jealous of the primacy claimed by Palmyra, now decided to abandon the town, and withdrew on her capital.

Aurelian had already been promised victory by some divine vision, and on visiting the sun temple of Emesa he professed to recognize in Elagabal the author of his success. He not only set up further shrines to the god, richly endowed, at Emesa, but on his return to Rome built a sun temple, in which Syrian and Persian rites were combined, and a pontifical college was attached to it.

The Romans now undertook the laborious march across the desert, in which they were constantly harassed by active

[1] Zos. i. 52. [2] Rufus, *Brev.* 23.

bands of Arab marauders, and then addressed themselves to the equally toilsome siege of Zenobia's capital. A determined resistance was offered, fire-throwing machines and missile weapons of every kind were employed. The queen's Arab allies were, however, repelled by Aurelian, who was reinforced by the Egyptian troops under Probus; nor could Zenobia count on any help from Persia. As frequently happened in Oriental states, confusion had followed on the death of the great king Sapor, and in any case it was not in the interests of the Sassanidae to uphold the power and independence of such a near neighbour as Palmyra.

The favourable terms proffered by Aurelian were indeed rejected, but Zenobia resolved to seek safety in flight. While endeavouring to escape to Persia she was overtaken and captured by the imperial cavalry near the Euphrates, and Wahballathus seems already to have fallen in the course of the siege. Palmyra soon after surrendered, and rich spoils were secured, Oriental stuffs, purple and silk fabrics, jewels, gold and silver ornaments, much of which treasure was used for embellishing the sun temple at Rome. The foreign auxiliaries of Zenobia were somewhat harshly treated, but the citizens had cause to congratulate themselves, being only punished by the establishment of a Roman governor in Palmyra, with a body of archers, and by the imposition of fines (A.D. 272).

After a trial at Emesa, several of the queen's advisers, including the philosopher Longinus, were executed; and one of her sons seems to have been accidentally drowned in the crossing to Byzantium. Beyond having to walk in the conqueror's triumph, loaded with jewels and held by golden fetters, no further punishment was inflicted on the captive queen, whose spirit had been broken by her misfortunes. She was allowed to settle with her remaining

children on an estate near Tibur, and descendants of hers still remained in Italy a century later.

Before Aurelian had returned to Rome to celebrate his triumph over the rebels of Gaul and Syria, when, indeed, he had scarcely crossed into Europe, news came that Palmyra was in revolt, and Egypt in danger of being lost to the empire.

M. Firmus was a rich Syrian merchant settled in Egypt who had considerable connections among the Arabs, and also traded as far as India. He had already upheld Zenobia's pretensions to Egypt, and now finding his trade impaired by Aurelian's conquests, concerted an outbreak with the remains of the national party at Palmyra. The Roman governor here was murdered, the garrison overpowered, and Achilleus, one of Zenobia's partisans, assumed the leadership. At the same time Firmus, supported by a multitude of native Egyptians, who were anxious to throw off the Roman yoke, took the purple himself, and occupied Alexandria.

Aurelian at once turned back, and without difficulty suppressed both outbreaks (A.D. 273). Palmyra was the scene of a fearful massacre, and the population was so much reduced that the fields were left untilled. The sun temple was indeed spared, and gold and silver ornaments were set up to replace the temple treasures removed to Rome. The remnant of the inhabitants were allowed to reoccupy the town, but it was now little more than a border village, and trade routes diverged farther north towards Antioch.

Palmyra was fortified by Diocletian, was soon after the seat of a bishop, and under Justinian it was restored and garrisoned, but it remained insignificant; to which cause we may attribute the preservation of the remarkable group of buildings which have attracted so many travellers in the

East since their rediscovery at the end of the seventeenth century.

These belong chiefly to the second and third centuries. They consist of the remains of colonnaded streets, much of the great sun temple and its enclosing courtyard, a smaller temple, many tomb towers of several stories, and about sixty feet high, on the adjoining hills, and some slight remains of private houses, chiefly lintels and door-posts. There are also portions of the town wall of Justinian's time; several underground tomb chambers; and aqueducts, coming to the surface within the walls, but outside subterranean, and reached by shafts forty feet deep, down which ropes could be lowered.

The colonnading of the principal streets was a feature of most ancient Syrian towns, perhaps in imitation of Antioch. At Palmyra this street is very much shorter than at Antioch, less than a mile long, but the columns, which stand in four rows, are of gigantic size, fifty or sixty feet high, with brackets for statues in the upper half, and many inscriptions showing that the colonnades belong to the first half of the second century. Each pair of rows was roofed in, the doors of the houses opening between the pillars, while bazaars were probably kept under the shelter of the roof. In some parts there is a second colonnade on the roof of a lower, providing a walk from which the street could be surveyed. At one end is a triple arch facing the site of the forum, and at certain points marked by tetrapyles other colonnades intersected the principal streets.

The sun temple stands on a raised terrace enclosed by a wall about fifty feet high, forming a square in which the present squalid village is huddled. This quadrangle had a continuous portico within, the columns being joined by stone beams to the walls, which are finely adorned with groups of pilasters, recesses, and square windows. On three of the sides there is a double row of columns, which, when

the plan was complete, are believed to have numbered 390. They have brackets and pedestals like those in the main street, some of them two brackets. The temple itself, which was peripterous with a single peristyle, is ruinous, but many of its fluted Corinthian columns still stand, and the friezes and recessed doorways are most richly adorned. The columns are from thirty to forty feet high, of marble or granite, the blocks being joined by metal clamps, with traces of gilding, and in some instances with bronze capitals. The carvings include signs of the zodiac, eagles with outstretched wings, genii, and pentagons containing busts in relief.

The small temple also had a peristyle with a double row of Corinthian columns, of which several remain.

Many of the tombs are remarkable for the stone reliefs, of which some, especially those of a mythological character, may merely be due to professional Greek sculptors, but others which represent peacocks, hunting scenes, etc., are more distinctively Oriental. A peculiar form of monument is an inscribed *stele* carved with a tiara on the top, like that worn by the wealthier class of citizens. Such a design has lasted on in the East till recent times.[1]

Diocletian, who gained the throne in A.D. 285, did more than any emperor since Trajan to strengthen and reorganize the eastern provinces. Early in his reign he left his capital, Nicomedia, in order to visit Syria and settle the relations of the empire with the Persian king, Varanes II. The latter, who was at the time faced by a serious revolt headed by his own brother Hormuz, renounced further aggressions. The same weakness on the part of Persia led to an important change in the condition of Armenia, which since Valerian's defeat had been annexed to the Persian dominions. The nation had been harshly treated, the sacred images rudely

[1] *Zeitsch. Morg. Gesell.* 39, 352.

destroyed to make way for Zoroastrian fire symbols, and the native nobility oppressed. Diocletian considered it a favourable opportunity for encouraging the Armenian prince Tiridates, who had for years lived among the Romans, to reclaim the throne of his ancestors. He was readily welcomed by his countrymen, as well as by a large body of Turkish auxiliaries whom the Persians had established as a garrison in Armenia.

In A.D. 290, Diocletian was obliged to visit Syria a second time by the threatening attitude of the Arab tribes, who were devastating the eastern districts. He visited Antioch and Emesa, and his generals gained a speedy success over these marauders, of whom large numbers were taken prisoners.[1] Six years of quiet ensued, when the advent of a new and stronger king, Narses, to the Persian throne provoked a fresh conflict with the empire. Seizing the opportunity when Diocletian was occupied in Egypt and his Caesar, Galerius, in the Danubian districts, he overran Armenia, and forced the new king Tiridates to return to Roman protection. It is doubtful whether Syria was actually invaded,[2] but it is clear that the Roman frontiers were menaced. Galerius hurried over with his army, and Diocletian advanced more slowly to Antioch. Galerius at once invaded Mesopotamia, which was then in Persian possession, and fought two indecisive battles. In a third, not far from Carrhae, the Persian cavalry, acting most effectively in these wide plains which had proved fatal to Crassus and Valerian, almost annihilated the Romans. Tiridates escaped by swimming the Euphrates, and Galerius returned in disgrace to his Augustus at Antioch with the wreck of his army.

[1] *Cf. Paneg. Const. Caes.* 21. They were apparently settled in Thrace.

[2] So Zon. xii. 31.

The next year a better plan of campaign was formed. While Diocletian checked any Persian advance across the Euphrates, Galerius, who had raised fresh troops in Europe, followed the example of Trajan and Carus, and advanced against the Persians from the north-west through the Armenian mountains. A sudden assault early in the morning resulted in the discomfiture of Narses' host (A.D. 297). Diocletian meanwhile reached Nisibis in Mesopotamia, where he met his younger colleague, and prudently judged that no further extension of the empire in this direction was advisable. After much negotiation with Narses it was agreed that the Tigris should henceforth be the boundary, Mesopotamia being thus completely incorporated in the empire. Further, five districts beyond the Tigris, which had belonged now to Armenia, now to Persia, were ceded to the Romans. They formed the plain between the southern Armenian mountains and those of Turkistan, and seem at this time merely to have been placed under satraps without a regular provincial organization. Tiridates was also restored to Armenia, which was augmented with the district of Atropatene.

These successes led to a long period of peace in the East, and Diocletian's reforming zeal now had free play. A long line of forts, the Syrian *limes*,[1] partly in augmentation of lines already existing, was carried down from the Euphrates past Bostra and Petra to the Red Sea. A strong camp was established on the Euphrates, and Cercusium, lying at its confluence with the Abora, was strengthened. Palmyra was fortified afresh, arsenals from which the garrisons could be supplied were set up at Antioch, Edessa, and Damascus, and many public works carried out, such as the improvement of the harbour at Seleucia.

In his provincial reorganization one of Diocletian's main objects was to introduce intermediate grades between the

[1] Amm. 23, 5.

imperial throne and the provincial governor, thus making it less likely that the latter would conspire against his master. With the same intention he sought to weaken the governor's position by reducing the area which he was called upon to administer, and by depriving him of military authority, which in provinces exposed to attack was transferred to a special commander or *dux*. He instituted a tetrarchy of four joint emperors, two holding the rank of Augustus, two subordinate, with the title of Caesar, but regarded as the destined successors of their seniors. While the Augusti divided the empire, now split into eastern and western halves, between them, each assigned to the supervision of his Caesar certain provinces in his own half. Each emperor, or perhaps at this time each Augustus, was aided by a praetorian prefect, who survived the abolition of the tetrarchy and had important duties from Constantine onwards.

Further, each quarter of the empire contained a group of three dioceses, every one controlled by a Vicar, and the diocese was in turn subdivided into a varying number of provinces, ruled by governors of different degrees of dignity, but all possessing only civil power. The tetrarchy hardly survived Diocletian's time, but the same results were attained under Constantine by the assignation of each quarter of the empire to a praetorian prefect, who supervised the Vicars, heard appeals from their decisions or those of the military *duces*, and was distinguished by a purple woollen cloak or *mandya*.

Since the time of Severus the geographical district of Syria had been divided into four provinces. Syria Magna or Coele, Phoenice, Arabia, and Palaestina. The Verona list of Diocletian's age gives six : (1) *Arabia*, that is, the southern half of Trajan's province, including the Sinaitic peninsula and a strip of the opposite coast, with the capital

Petra. (2) *Arabia Augusta Libanensis*, the northern part of Trajan's Arabia, together with Auranitis, Batanea, and Trachonitis, perhaps also Gerasa and Philadelphia in Decapolis, all cut off from Phoenice.[1] The capital was Bostra. (3) *Palaestina*, capital Caesarea, under a *consularis* towards the middle of the fourth century, before A.D. 365 apparently under a proconsul.[2] (4) *Phoenice*, capital Tyre, under a *praeses*, the lowest rank of governor, in Diocletian's time;[3] later he had the higher dignity of *consularis*. (5) *Syria Coele*, capital Antioch, under a *consularis*. (6) *Augusta Euphratensis*, capital Cyrrus, including the former areas Commagene and Cyrrhestice, cut off from Coele, and placed under a *praeses*. Like Libanensis, it was apparently instituted by Diocletian himself.

Besides these, there were to the north-east the provinces of (1) *Osrhoene*, capital Edessa; (2) *Mesopotamia*, capital Amida.

This large group, and several adjoining districts, went to make up the first or Asian diocese, the Vicar of which in the course of the fourth century resided at Antioch and received the title *Comes Orientis*. Diocletian himself retained the special supervision of all these Asiatic provinces, ruling them chiefly from Nicomedia; but he also spent much time at Antioch, especially while organizing the defences of the eastern frontier, and here he obliged his colleague Galerius to follow his chariot on foot, as a mark of disgrace after his failure in the Persian war.

One rising took place in Syria towards the end of the reign, the events of which show that Antioch was already in the defenceless state which made it an easy victim of

[1] *Cf.* Amm. 14, 8, 8.; Marquardt, i. 277. The area is, however, at this period doubtful, and the province seems soon to have been reabsorbed, and revived in the next century. (Harrer, *Studies in the History of the Roman province of Syria*, p. 61.)

[2] Pauly-Wissowa, iv. 11412. [3] Cod. Just. ix. 449.

the Persian arms two centuries later. Five hundred legionaries were being employed to deepen the entrance to the harbour of Seleucia. The work was arduous, lasting all day, while much of the night had to be devoted to the preparation of food. The men, as was frequently done by rebellious soldiers under the empire, forced their officer, a tribune named Eugenius, to declare himself emperor. A purple robe was obtained, one that had covered an image in some neighbouring temple. Villages were plundered, and the disorderly band, stupefied with the wine they had stolen, arrived at Antioch in the evening, and installed their emperor in the palace. The citizens, however, realizing that the invaders were not very formidable, seized such implements as they had—bolts, bars, and workmen's tools—and the soldiers were plied with stones and darts from the roofs, even women taking part in the fight. But few of the rebels escaped, and Eugenius also was put to death. In spite of these marks of loyalty the jealous Diocletian caused several of the leading citizens both of Seleucia and Antioch to be executed, one being the grandfather of the orator Libanius (A.D. 303).[1]

Diocletian's military measures proved successful; the advance of the Persians was delayed for half a century, and till the time of Julian ecclesiastical questions absorb most of the historian's attention. On his abdication in A.D. 305, Galerius, Diocletian's successor in the East, appointed his nephew Maximinus Daza to administer Syria and Egypt, and he, after the death of Galerius in A.D. 311, governed all Asia, while Licinius was allotted eastern Europe. Two years later the eastern emperors turned on each other. Maximin, who left an odious character as a harsh and despotic ruler, perished in the war, and Licinius succeeded to the sovereignty of the whole East.

[1] Lib. *Or.* xi. 324; xix. 644; xx. 661; *cf.* Euseb *H. F* viii. 6.

In his first war with Constantine he was obliged to surrender the eastern parts of Europe, and after the decisive battle of Adrianople (A.D. 323) the entire empire was re-united under Constantine's sway. The principle of sub-division was, however, felt to be a sound one, and it was periodically revived in various ways. Constantine himself allotted certain provinces to each of his three sons, with the title of Caesar, and Constantius thus received Asia and Egypt, which he retained after his father's death.

The extensive military reorganization of the period affected Syria, as a strongly garrisoned country, as much as the civil changes. One of its objects was to break up the large commands among a number of persons, and similarly to reduce the great stationary camps by distributing the troops among smaller garrisons and frontier forts. The military forces of the empire were indeed enlarged, but this was effected chiefly by the enlistment of barbarian recruits. These were less dangerous to the emperor's security than citizens, while their enrolment did not diminish the number of tax-payers. They were usually enfranchised on leaving the army, and were allotted lands on the frontier which they had protected, while their sons succeeded to their position, and a permanent militia was thus secured.

Legions were more numerous than in the early empire, but smaller, and subdivided in such a way as to render serious revolts unlikely. The threatened areas were mapped out among *duces*, who also controlled the fleets maintained in their neighbourhood, such as that on the Euphrates. Thus a *dux* seems to have taken the place of a civil governor at Bostra, and other *duces* are mentioned in the fourth century in Palestine, Phoenice, Syria, Osrhoene, and Mesopotamia, which last was garrisoned with considerable bodies of cavalry. Above them stood officials

with more extensive commands, *magistri militum*, of whom two were quartered in the Asiatic provinces.

The period from the beginning of the Palmyrene revolt to the death of Constantine (A.D. 270-337) witnessed a remarkable revival in the authority of Rome in the East. The empire, which under Gallienus seemed falling to pieces through internal sedition and foreign attack, presents itself as a carefully organized whole, under an emperor ruling by divine right through a double hierarchy of civil and military officials, a system clearly owing more to the despotic traditions of Asia than to any European methods. Syria was left strongly fortified, Persians and Arabs were repelled and discouraged; the cities were adorned with splendid churches and monuments. Degrading superstitions were giving place to Christianity, which in many towns even in Constantine's time numbered a large proportion of the inhabitants as adherents. Material prosperity was considerable. The respect long felt by Rome for Greek and Oriental institutions stood in the way of any attempt to enforce absolute uniformity in provincial or local administration. The corporation system, a source of many ills to the western provinces, was less universally established in Asia; and the office of *decurio* or local senator, though burdensome from the number of liturgies which custom required of the holder, was not regarded as that of a harassed tax-collector. The security of the times rendered Syria, which was, unlike much of the West, well guarded against barbarian inroads, a great centre for trade and agriculture; and it is from the fourth century that date many of those towns and villages of the interior whose comfortable and well-designed middle-class dwellings still surprise the traveller.

CHAPTER VII

NATURAL PRODUCTS AND COMMERCE. EMIGRATION TO THE WEST.

"Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of thy handyworks: they traded for thy wares with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and rubies."—EZEKIEL.

THE flora of the Syrian coast resembles that of other Mediterranean shores. Evergreen shrubs with narrow, leathery leaves are plentiful; there is little of meadow-land or turf, but long flowering reeds and varieties of lilies, tulips, hyacinths, and orchids are common, producing brilliant colour effects. About the lower reaches of rivers grow laurels, myrtles, and other flowering shrubs, surrounded by wreaths of ivy, twining roses, passion-flower, and oleander. This rich vegetation alternates with barren sandy areas, or, again, it is cleared to form orchards or plantations of date-palms. In both ancient and modern times wood has been liable to be displaced in favour of fruit-trees, of which olives, figs, vines, pomegranates, and walnuts were extensively cultivated, particularly on the lower slopes of the mountains. Much timber for shipping was cut on Lebanon, especially cypresses and firs, several varieties of which were expressly reserved for the Roman fleet.[1] The cedars of Lebanon are now confined to a single patch south-east of Tripoli, and except for some pine plantations, which once supplied the Tyrian dyers and Sidonian glass-blowers

[1] Renan, *Mission*, 279; *cf.* Veget. v. 4.

with wood for their furnaces, the mountains are nearly bare. In Antilibanus also cedars are extinct, the poplar being the chief growth of the district.

Agricultural populations were established on the lower slopes of the mountains, as well as about the courses of rivers, from which artificial canals were cut to irrigate the cornfields, the vines, and olives of the plains. Irrigation was a leading feature in the prosperity of ancient Syria. Rock-hewn cisterns for preserving rain, still sometimes in use, are often met with, and fine vaulted well-houses resting on pillars. In many villages there was a pond, *limne,* for animals, and a cistern below every house. A record exists of the gratitude felt by one small town on the Arabian frontier at being allowed to draw on the springs supplying another group of places, in one of which it set up as a thank-offering a temple to the local goddess Allath-Athena.[1]

The camel was greatly used, together with the ordinary domestic animals. Horses and mules, however, were not favoured by the climate of the coast regions, and were imported from Asia Minor. There were large flocks of sheep in the interior, and wool was plentiful.[2] Of wild animals, the lion and the bear, both now extinct, were hunted in the wilder parts, as also leopards, tiger-cats, wolves, and various kinds of deer. Sea-fish was plentiful, but little was found in the rivers, owing to the rapidity of their course.

Mineral wealth was unimportant. Iron exists in the mountains behind Berytus, and may have been worked when wood was more abundant, but the iron used by the smiths of Damascus was imported from India, and copper came chiefly from Asia Minor. Basalt and limestone were much used for building, but finer materials had to be imported, as Egyptian granite or Greek marbles.

[1] Dussaud, *Voyage Arch.* 197. [2] Plin. viii. 48.

On the Phoenician coast, especially in the deposit of the river Belus (Naaman) near Ptolemais,[1] was found the valuable siliceous sand which, with the addition of a mineral alkali, was made into glass at Sidon.

The climate was on the whole healthy, except for some fevers on the coast; the shortness and rapidity of the rivers prevented the formation of pestiferous swamps, and the chief natural disadvantage referred to in ancient times is the liability to earthquakes, which time after time laid the finest towns in ruins.

Both manufactures and agriculture flourished greatly in Roman times, when trade was encouraged by the safeguarding of the frontiers, the laying out of roads and bridges, and the facilities for commerce with Italy and the West. The keen and growing demand for the luxuries produced in Syria, or brought through from the remoter East, was not matched by any great importation of western products. Gold and silver to pay for them poured into Asia, and the great coast towns became filled with a wealthy population of shippers,[2] merchants, agents, and superior artisans who subsisted by foreign trade.

Syrian manufactures most exported were glass and metal work, linen fabrics, and dyed stuffs, especially wool and silk; and in all the Phoenicians took the lead. In view of the poverty of their own country in minerals, they actively worked mines in their dependencies, especially Spain and Cyprus, and at an early date had become noted metal-workers. Thus Achilles offered as a prize in the foot-race a beautiful silver cup embossed by Sidonian craftsmen.[3] Statuary was also produced, though not marked by much originality; and it was to an artificer of Sidon that

[1] Plin. v. 19.

[2] At some Phoenician towns these shippers formed an organized college; *cf.* C. I. Gr. 4736h (Aradus), *πρόβουλος τῶν ναυαρχησάντων*.

[3] *Il.* xxiii. 743.

the Syrian legate applied when ordered by Caligula to have a colossal imperial effigy set up in the Temple at Jerusalem.[1] As regards glass-work the Sidonians attained great proficiency in the use of blow-pipes, lathes, and graving tools, imitating precious stones and colouring glass by means of oxides. Thus Herodotus [2] saw in the temple of Melcarth at Tyre a pillar of emerald which shone at night, doubtless a hollow green glass cylinder containing a lamp.

Tyre was hardly less prosperous under the Romans than in the days of its independence; even a fourth-century geographer describes it as still the first commercial city in Syria. To the Romans it was especially associated with the purple dye. The fish which produced this, found only on the neighbouring strip of coast, were of two sorts, *murex*, the more highly appreciated, and *buccinum*.[3] These were caught in early spring by means of ropes let down, with baskets fastened at intervals and baited with mussels or frogs. In the case of the *murex* the sac containing the colour, which lay behind the head, was removed while it was still alive, but the *buccinum* was all crushed together. Salt and water were added, and the mixture was simmered and skimmed. Next, the wool to be dyed was dipped in it, carded, and again steeped. The colours produced were of every shade of blue and purple, as amethyst, heliotrope, mallow, and violet. Cloth of the finest quality, *dibaphon*, in which the process was twice repeated, might cost as much as 1,000 denarii (nearly £40) a pound. Still more expensive was the purple silk, of which the finest variety, imperial purple, was a monopoly of Tyre. Mulberries and silkworms were only introduced into Syria under Justinian; previously raw silk was brought from the far East, chiefly China, by Persian merchants, and dyed and woven into

[1] Philo, *Leg. ad Caium*, 42. [2] ii. 44.
[3] Plin. ix. 38.

cloaks by the *sericarii* of Tyre or Berytus.[1] The price might be less for mixtures of silk with flax or cotton. A peculiarity of garments thus coloured was the way in which they lit up in a bright light, like the hunting cloak described by Philostratus,[2] which, " though it had a gloomy air, drew a certain beauty from the sunlight, and was bedewed with a sheen as of polished metal." Minor dye-works existed at Sarepta, Caesarea, Neapolis, Lydda, and Dora.

The growing of flax and weaving it into linen, an art of Babylonian origin, was a staple industry of a great part of Syria, the fabrics being largely exported to the West from Berytus, Tyre, and Byblus.[3]

Other exports consisted chiefly of wines, various oils, dried fruits, and unguents. Wheat was fairly abundant, especially in Palestine, but not more was grown than sufficed for the needs of the province. In some volcanic areas, however, the yield is enormous; thus corn sown in parts south-east of Damascus after the rainy season may produce a hundred to a hundred and twenty fold.

Vines were widely cultivated on terraces laid out on the lower slopes of the hills and other parts where a sufficiency of rain could be expected. The enclosing walls of rough stone can still sometimes be traced, with rows of upright stones within, once supporting wooden cross-pieces round which the plants would twine. One of the best brands of wine, also commended by modern travellers, was that of the Orontes valley round Apamea. A large wine-press in this part still has inscribed over the door through which the grapes were thrown a Latin couplet, probably of the fourth century, referring to the sweetness of the juice in

[1] *Cf.* Renan, *Miss.* 348 (Samuel, a Jewish silk-worker of Berytus).

[2] *Imag.* 27.

[3] *Expositio*, 31. The woven goods of Byblus were still important at the time of Diocletian's tariff.

that rich and sunny valley.[1] It was Apamene grapes which Elagabalus had supplied for his horses at Rome.[2] Laodicea exported much wine from vines grown on the terraces above the town, and the Philistine coast, especially Ascalon and Gaza, was celebrated for wine, which was exported to Egypt and all parts of the Mediterranean from the harbour of Maiumas. It was of a powerful kind, and was, late in the empire, in demand even among the inhabitants of France.[3]

Hundreds of oil and wine presses, the latter smaller, are found by explorers in all parts of northern Syria. Sometimes the press is cut in the surface of a flat rock, or, again, the hollow is sheltered by a roof of wood resting on pillars; others are rock-hewn underground. There is usually a rectangular vat with a pointed stone used to crush out the juice, and a smaller basin for water adjoining. Near the bottom of the latter there is a communication with a round cistern covered by a flat stone lid.

The *oenanthe*, or wild vine, which grew near Antioch and Laodicea, supplied raisins. The fruit was gathered when it was most fragrant, dried on linen cloths in the shade, and put in casks. It could also be used for making a kind of unguent.[4]

The oil of the Phoenician slopes had been famous since the neighbouring tribe of Asher "dipped his foot in oil."[5] Olives were also plentiful in the Orontes valley, in the parts now almost desert to the east of Emesa, as proved by the

[1] *C. I. L.* iii. 188 (Bara):

> Nectareos succos, Baccheia munera, cernis,
> Quae bitis genuit sub aprico sole refecta.

[2] Lampr. *Elag.* 21.

[3] Greg. Turon. *Hist. Franc.* vii. 29: Ad requirenda potentiora vina, Laticina scilicet atque Gazitina.

[4] Plin. xii. 28; Lampr. *Elag.* 23.

[5] *Deut.* xxxiii. 24.

numbers of large basalt presses which still remain, and along the Philistine coast. The oil was of a fragrant kind, and was imported into Italy as early as the time of Catullus.[1] Other scented oils, unguents, and balsams were in great demand. Sesame oil came from north of Damascus and the plain of Esdraelon. The juice of the sumach was used medicinally; that of the cinnamon was valued as a flavouring, and according to Pliny cost 40 *asses* the pound. The *elate*, a kind of fir growing in shady parts, supplied a juice used to temper unguents. The resinous shrub storax grew in Phoenicia and northern Syria. Its reed-like stalks had a thick red juice used both in medicine and as an unguent. An oil believed, among other properties, to be able to drive away serpents, was extracted from the *galbanum*, and from the *melobathrum* (perhaps the betel) a costly ointment was prepared. The balm tree, the juice of which was largely imported at Rome, was plentiful in Palestine. The bark was incised by means of glass, stone, or bone, and the balm collected drop by drop. Lastly, the cyprus or henna, found on the Philistine coast, and the oil of lilies or oil of Syria, were famous perfumes.[2] These scents and flavourings were still objects of export in the later empire, and form a special section in Diocletian's maximum tariff.[3]

Fresh and dried fruits, imported in peculiar conical-shaped baskets, were common in Italy; dried figs, *caricae* or the smaller *cottana*,[4] plums from Damascus, black pears,[5] dates, walnuts, pistachios[6] were all sought after. Some trees, though not peculiar to Syria, became first familiar to the Romans there; the lesser cedar of Phoenicia, which resembled the juniper and supplied wood which was well

[1] vi. 8.

[2] Plin. 21, 11; 23, 49.

[3] *Bull. Corr. Hellén.* xxii. 403.

[4] *Cf.* Juv. iii. 83.

[5] Verg. *Georg.* ii. 88; Plin. xv. 15; Juv. xi. 73.

[6] *Cf.* Athen. xiv. 649; Plin. xiii. 5; they were held effective in curing snake-bite.

suited for divine images owing to its durability,[1] and the terebinth, with its small red resinous fruit. Papyrus was occasionally found, and was used for ships' ropes, but both in quality and quantity it was inferior to the Egyptian.

In the earlier days of Roman supremacy the far-eastern trade was mostly brought to the Red Sea and overland to Alexandria, but by the second century the annexation of Roman Arabia, and the consequent development of the road system under Trajan and his successors, caused much of the Persian, Indian, and Arabian commerce to pass by way of Palmyra or Petra to the Syrian ports. From Arabia came incense, myrrh, etc.; from India, spices, ointments, jewels, skins, ivory, cotton fabrics, and slaves; from China, silk, arriving either by the overland route or by sea to Charax on the Persian Gulf, and then up the Euphrates and so across to Damascus and the sea. From northern China a special silk route, mentioned by Ptolemy, led through Turkestan to Bactria, Media, and the Euphrates.

This led to the development of many inland commercial centres situated at the junction of roads, especially Palmyra, Bostra, and Petra; Greeks, who had after Alexander's conquests settled in the remote East, returned to such border towns, which became filled with fine buildings and were inhabited by numbers of rich merchants.

No great amount of road-laying was necessary in the parts of Syria first annexed. Most of the possible routes were clearly defined by nature, and, though seldom passable by wheeled vehicles, had been used for traffic from time immemorial; but the annexation of the eastern tetrarchies and the Nabataean kingdom necessitated more activity. One of the most famous routes, opened in Trajan's time, led, as its milestones proudly assert, from the borders of the Syria to the Red Sea, and both Petra and Bostra were

[1] Plin. xiii. 5.

put into direct communication with the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, Damascus, and Palmyra, from which last a highway communicated with the Euphrates. More remote caravan routes were only marked out by large stones at the side, many of which still remain, but paved roads were commoner, sometimes built of large blocks of basalt encased in a border of stone.

One great road of the second century, much of which still exists, is cut in the solid rock and paved with huge limestone blocks. It led east from Antioch, over hills and plain to Chalcis, and late in the empire formed part of an important eastern trade-route to Babylon and beyond. Chrysostom[1] gives an interesting account of this road, which he suggests was not often traversed by the Syrians themselves as far as Babylon, the trade then being probably to a large extent in the hands of Persian or Armenian merchants. He describes it as fairly well frequented, with halting-places at short intervals, the security of which, as well as of the road in general, was secured by the magistrates of neighbouring townships, who supplied guards armed with javelins, bows, and slings, under captains entirely devoted to the service. The road itself was paved, and the holes left by torrents carefully filled up, an example, he adds, of the advantage to trade of the unity of law and government, a recognition of the benefits of Roman rule somewhat rare in Syrian writers. Ruins of khans such as Chrysostom mentions are occasionally found, sometimes with inscriptions showing that they were erected by private benevolence. They would merely be resting-places of one room, roofed, and having a divan running all round, with stables for the horses or camels adjoining, everything having to be found by the travellers themselves. The recognized name seems to have been the barbarous Latino-

[1] *Ad Stag.* ii. 6.

Greek *stablon periklinon*.[1] More important inns of course existed in towns, and in the Christian period were frequently provided for pilgrims in the vicinity of the more-visited shrines. They are built of rough, irregular stones, of two or three stories, sometimes with two-storied porticoes which could be used for sleeping in during the heat of the day, and cellars beneath for the storage of goods.[2] Such buildings would be used not only by travellers, but as meeting-places for the citizens of neighbouring townships.

The conveniences mentioned by Chrysostom were only possible in the inhabited areas, which from the side of Antioch covered a large part of the journey to the Euphrates. For crossing the great desert special precautions had to be taken, which have not greatly varied up to the present time. Armed guards were necessary against attacks from the nomad Arabs, and a synodiarch or head of the caravan, who commanded them and arranged for the provisioning and stopping-places, was chosen by the merchants. In the case of caravans passing through Palmyra, the city usually sent a young noble to conduct the merchants through the desert, and if the journey were safely completed he might be saluted as *Asthorubaida*, or prince of the desert.[3]

The chief document remaining on the internal trade of Syria is the Palmyrene tariff inscription of A.D. 137, containing a decree of the local senate and a series of resolutions for executing it.[4] It was found in 1881, in a Greek and a Syriac version, and was designed to regularize the imposi-

[1] Dussaud, *Voyage Arch.* p. 145; Waddington, 2161; an alternative and more classical title, *πανδοκεῖον*, produced the mediaeval Syriac foundouq.

[2] *Cf.* Princeton Expedition, pt. iii., p. 46.

[3] C. I. Gr. 4490 (141 A.D.); *cf.* 4489.

[4] *Hermes*, xix. 486 *seq.* with commentary of Dessau; *Bull. C. H.* vi. 439.

tion of tolls on passing caravans, and obviate disputes between the collectors and merchants. Previously, fixed charges had only been tabulated for a few articles, other tolls being levied according to custom. The magistrates were now ordered to examine into the omissions, and insert the customary dues in the next contract between the city and the tax-farmers, publishing the complete list by notice in front of a temple, and checking future illegal exactions. Probably most exports and imports had previously been taxed according to a percentage of their supposed value. Rates are here fixed for each slave imported, for camel, ass, and waggon loads of goods, for purple-dyed wool (8 *asses* a skin for export), and for alabaster boxes of ointment, which were charged 25 denarii the camel-load, ointment in goatskin bottles being less. Small animals were taxed 1 *as* each, unloaded camels 1 denarius each; victuals 1 denarius a camel-load, but only for passing into or out of Palmyrene territory, trade with neighbouring villages under the city magistrates being free. Provisions taken by the caravan for their own use were liable. Like soldiers, they carried wheat, not bread, and it was ground in hand-mills every evening, and baked or made into porridge. Other items, in addition to those in the old statute, which were not repeated, are pine-kernels (which are still eaten in Syria) and other small fruits, as nuts or almonds. These, even when fresh, were only to be taxed according to the space they would occupy dried.

The contractors who raised these dues also farmed several others, as the rent of workshops, tanneries, and other businesses conducted on state property, and the salt tax, a state monopoly; as well as dues for the slaughter of animals within the town for food, and for the use of public wells. This probably applies not to residents but to the caravans, which filled their water-bottles before

starting, and watered their animals on arrival. Such payments would usually be made by the synodiarch, to be collected from the merchants or, if he wished to earn popularity, at his own expense. The complimentary inscriptions at Palmyra in honour of synodiarchs who had assisted caravans were no doubt evoked by generosity of this sort.[1] In case of failure to pay tolls the contractor could take pledges from the merchant, and after an interval sell them, the jurisdiction apparently being with a resident Roman *juridicus*. Pliny[2] at an earlier date refers to exactions levied by Arab tribes from merchants for water, fodder, or merely for stopping in their settlements; payments, for instance, for the export of incense having to be made to the king, priests, scribes, and other officials of the Gebbanite Arabs. At Palmyra it seems likely that similar exactions had been regularized by an official tariff under Roman authority. The only measure referred to is the Roman *modius*, and only sums below 1 denarius could be paid in other than Roman money. Even at this date, however, an unusual amount of local freedom remained, the tolls being fixed by the city authorities and used for local purposes.

Elsewhere in Syria the Roman government fixed the toll, and in most parts, as in the custom-houses set up by Trajan[3] on the Euphrates and Tigris, it was collected by Roman publicani.

Besides such wealthy caravans with their armed guards, poorer companies had often to travel; and, when the journey from one town to another was thought dangerous, travellers would wait till fairly large numbers had assembled, in the hope of greater safety from the Arabs, who, if there

[1] Dittenberger, 629 *seq.* [2] xii. 64.

[3] *Cf.* Fronto, p. 209 (Naber), on the dues for camels and horses after his conquest of Mesopotamia, and Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* i. 18, ὁ τελώνης ὁ ἐπιβεβλημένος τῷ Ζεύγματι.

were little to steal, were quite capable of carrying off and enslaving any provincials who promised to be serviceable. Jerome records his visit to a Syriac-speaking monk named Malchus, who had settled in the village of Maronia, not far from Antioch, after an adventure of this kind. A native of the district of Nisibis in Mesopotamia, he had joined a monastic community in the desert of Chalcis in northern Syria, and desiring to visit his relations, set out with a party of about seventy, including many women and children, by the desert road from Beroea towards Edessa. They were attacked by a horde of Arabs mounted on horses and camels, armed with bows and javelins. The marauders were half-naked, with a loose cloak, sandals, their long hair held in by a ribbon, and quivers hanging from their shoulders. Malchus and another were separated from the rest and carried away on camels to the flocks of their new master. He was obliged to give up the Syrian costume for the loin-cloth of the Arabs, fed on half-raw flesh, cheese, and camel's milk, and tended the sheep and goats. The Christians eventually escaped by killing two goats, taking their flesh for food, and crossing a river on the inflated skins, which for the time put the pursuers off the track. However, the master and a slave had nearly overtaken them on swift camels when they took refuge in a cave. This was tenanted by a lioness and her cubs, and by a seeming miracle the Christians were spared, while the two Arabs were torn to pieces as they tried to enter. The fugitives secured the camels, and soon found themselves in safety under the jurisdiction of Sabianus, the Roman *dux* of Mesopotamia.

An important subject closely connected with Syrian trade is the emigration of Syrian traders and agents, with other persons engaged in professions or commerce, to the European provinces, and the influence exerted by them. From

the close of the war against Antiochus (189 B.C.) Asiatic slaves began to pass into the West, some at first as prisoners of war, but later in the ordinary way of commerce, especially through the great slave market of Delos; being kidnapped by the slave merchants of the coast, or debtors, or offenders against the laws of the kingdom. Thus, even in Terence, Syrus and Syra are typical names of slaves. With their good knowledge of Greek [1] and national versatility and cunning, these Syrians often obtained their freedom and settled in Italy.

In Sicily they were especially numerous on the great corn-growing estates of Greek and Roman capitalists, and here their lot was hard and oppressive. The first great rising (135 B.C.) was headed by a certain slave of Enna, Eunus from Apamea, who had apparently been attached to the shrine of the Syrian goddess in that city.[2] He professed to foretell the future by dreams, and to have waking visions, sometimes making lucky hits. He could breathe fire by concealing in his mouth a nutshell containing lighted sulphur, a device similar to that which substantiated the claims of the false Messiah Barcochab.[3] Before the revolt he declared that the goddess herself had appeared and foretold that he should be a king. When the insurrection broke out he took the traditional royal name of Antiochus, made his *contubernalis* a queen, and assumed a royal state, with cook, baker, jester, and rubber after the bath, his associates being designated generically as *Syri*. In the revolt of 103 B.C. the servile leader Salvius was chosen largely for his supposed knowledge of divination, and likewise assumed the kingly Syrian name of Tryphon.

[1] Cicero (*De Or*. ii. 66) quotes a remark of his father's: "Nostros homines similes esse Syrorum venalium; ut quisque optime Graece sciret, ita esse nequissimum."

[2] *Cf*. Diod. 34 *frag*.; Flor. ii. 7.

[3] Jer. *in Ruf*. iii.

Under the empire the number of Syrian slaves and freedmen increased; they acted as domestics in large houses, carried their masters' litters,[1] were professional musicians, diviners, chariot-drivers, mimes, gladiators.[2] Others were prophets and prophetesses, such as the Martha who attended Marius, and whose splendid robes and affected airs are well described by Plutarch. Many of these people eventually settled down as petty dealers, inn-keepers, etc., and in the towns small shrines to their ancestral gods began to appear. In rural districts of Italy and the provinces they might be too much scattered to maintain a shrine. Thus there grew up, in imitation of the wandering priests of Cybele, a disreputable class who professed the service of the Syrian goddess, and went about promising benefits and collecting alms from the faithful of the district, or contributions from the slaves' *peculium*. The description of such a party in Apuleius,[3] a devotee of the rival cult of Isis, is by no means favourable. The head was Philebus, an old man with a few grey locks, who with his followers conveyed the image of the goddess on a beast of burden through various towns and villages, playing cymbals, castanets, flutes, and drums. Their faces were painted, and they wore Oriental turbans, saffron-coloured robes of linen or silk, and yellow shoes. The idol itself was arrayed in silk. As they advanced they danced to the sound of the flute, waving knives and axes, and occasionally cutting themselves. At times they would break into frantic self-accusations, and scourge themselves with thongs loaded with pieces of bone, hardly seeming to feel the pain; penances which were liberally rewarded by their dupes, whom they also tried to deceive by a very transparent method of divination. The party is left by the

[1] Juv. vi. 351; *cf.* viii. 160; Mart. ix. 22, 9.

[2] *E.g.*, Wilmanns, 2615 (Panormus).

[3] *Met.* viii. 24 *seq.*

author in gaol, a fate which had justly befallen them for borrowing from a temple of Cybele a golden cup, which they professed that the Phrygian goddess would be very willing to part with for the service of her Syrian sister.

The cult of the goddess came to Rome early in the imperial age, and for a time gained the devotion of Nero; but the temple, which probably stood with other foreign shrines across the Tiber, may not have been earlier than the Antonines.[1]

Syrian settlers have sometimes been regarded as the most corrupting element in the Graeco-Roman world, but such Orientals comprised a number of classes representing many activities, and their love of wandering led to extensive emigration. Besides the sharpers and degraded entertainers of the rabble, there was a steady stream of merchants, soldiers, both legionary and auxiliary, philosophers, architects, and literary or scientific men. Syrians did useful work in the civil service of the empire, in local administration, and in the control of mines, harbours, workshops, and revenues; displaying the business capacity which later made them valued servants of the Arab caliphate.

Even in the second century B.C. a number of Syrian and Phoenician merchants and shippers were settled in Delos, where an extensive commerce with Syria and Egypt was carried on.[2] They here formed religious associations, devoted to Aphrodite-Astarte, the Poseidon of Berytus, Hadad of Heliopolis, and Heracles-Melcarth of Tyre, each with its own shrine and priests. Others settled at the Piraeus, in Asia Minor, and the islands, especially Rhodes, where the Phoenicians of Aradus maintained a special proxenus or consul.[3]

They reached Italy about the Augustan age, and Mise-

[1] Suet. *Ner.* 56; *Hermes*, vi. 223.

[2] *Bull. C. H.* vii. 468 *seq.*; C. I. Gr. 2271.

[3] C. I. Gr. 2126.

num, Neapolis, Puteoli, and Rome all retain traces of their settlements and dedications. The Tyrians of Puteoli formed a rich and populous colony, with buildings of which vestiges still exist on the Via Campana. An important second-century inscription[1] contains a letter from the merchants to the senate and people of Tyre, pointing out that their numbers were now much reduced, and that they were unable to pay the annual rent of 250 denarii to the town for their *statio*, or meeting-place, in addition to performing certain religious ceremonies. There are references to a larger *statio* at Rome and to another Tyrian settlement at Ostia. Merchants of Apamea were numerous in the West[2]; at Puteoli are dedications to Jupiter of Heliopolis, to the god of Damascus, and to the Arab deity Dusares, to whom two golden camels were here dedicated by a worshipper, as we learn from an inscription in Sinaitic characters.[3] At Ostia are traces of Marnas, the patron of Gaza, a city which had considerable trade with Italy; and the Maiuma,[4] a nautical festival annually celebrated at Ostia, seems to have originated in the Philistine city.

Such dedications in the West are chiefly in Latin, Syriac being rare. When, however, this is used, we can see that the Syrians had not lost sight of the identity of their gods in the colourless epithets which were substituted for them in the Western languages. Thus a number of Palmyrenes set up at Rome a tablet carved with figures of the sun carried by an eagle; the Latin dedication merely states that the offering is "sacred to the most holy sun," the Aramaic recalls by name "Malakhbel and the gods of Tadmor."[5]

Merchants also appear along the Danube shores in

[1] C. I. L. x. 1601; Dittenberger, 595. [2] C. I. L. iii. p. 1060.
[3] *Cf. Zeitsch. Morg. Gesell.* xxiii. 150.
[4] Suid. *s.v.; Rec. d'Arch. Orient.* iv. 339. [5] C. I. L. vi. 710.

Pannonia, at Malaca in Spain, at Lugdunum, Arelatum, Treviri, and other places in Gaul, which province they did much to develop commercially. Thus a decurio of Canatha in Syria, Julianus Thaemus, had two factories near the Rhone for the export of Aquitanian goods.[1] They acted as bankers and extended the importation and distribution of luxuries from their native province. When Christianity became general in the western provinces the Syrians exercised a certain influence on its development, both in the direction of monasticism and of a more emotional form of worship, as, for instance, in the adoption of the crucifix as a religious emblem. In France they remained numerous far into the Middle Ages. Their retention of Syriac at Orleans in the fifth century is mentioned by Gregory of Tours,[2] and at Paris a Syrian Christian had sufficient influence to secure the episcopal throne himself and find subordinate posts for several of his countrymen.[3]

The art and architecture of the empire were materially influenced by Oriental artificers. Even in the second century Trajan alludes to the frequency with which architects from the eastern provinces were employed at Rome.[4] A famous engineer in his own employment was Apollodorus of Damascus, who built the great bridge over the Danube during the second Dacian campaign,[5] and afterwards designed the forum of Trajan at Rome, with the temple, library, and still existing column, commemorating the victories of his patron. It is somewhat remarkable that this design of mounting a statue on a colossal column was peculiarly a Syrian one, occurring, for instance, in the Commagene royal monuments.

[1] Wilmanns, 2498. [2] *Hist. Fr.* vii. 29.
[3] *Ibid.* x. 26. [4] Plin. *Ep. ad Traj.* 40.
[5] Part of his *Poliorcetica*, or treatise on siege-works, is still extant.

Another class of settlers was formed by the auxiliary cohorts, and to a less extent the legionaries, who were raised among the more warlike peoples of Syria, the Palmyrenes, Emesenes, Commagenians, Ituraeans, and other Arabs. These were particularly numerous in the Danubian provinces, as Pannonia, Rhaetia, and Dacia. One site, Carnuntum,[1] had more than one Oriental shrine, and other dedications occur in Algeria, Cappadocia, Egypt, and several frontier stations of Britain, such as Caerleon[2] (to Jupiter Dolichenus), Corbridge (to Astarte and Melcarth), Magnae in Northumberland (to the Syrian goddess and Jupiter of Heliopolis). These men often settled after their discharge in the province where they had been stationed, and so helped to spread a knowledge of Oriental beliefs and modes of thought. Though the emigrant Syrians usually remained in the province of their adoption, there are several cases of their ultimate return to the East, sometimes with foreign wives, such as the Gallic woman of Rouen, who died " far from her native land," as the Greek epitaph says, on the borders of Arabia, towards the middle of the fourth century.[3] Such interchanges between the inhabitants of the most diverse parts of the world may have been in the mind of the last great Roman poet when he reflects on the unifying power of the Roman empire:

> Huius pacificis debemus moribus omnes
> Quod veluti patriis regionibus utitur hospes;
> Quod bibimus passim Rhodanum, potamus Orontem;
> Quod cuncti gens una sumus.[4]

It is difficult to estimate the share which Oriental influences had in transforming the methods of govern-

[1] C. I. L. iii. 11131 *seq.* [2] *Ibid.* vii. 98.

[3] *Rev. Arch.* 1901, ii. 375, at Mothana, now above the door of a mosque.

[4] Claud. *II. Cons. Stil.* 154.

ment and corrupting, or at any rate modifying, the character of the peoples among whom the Orientals settled. Such new influences were presented mainly through the medium of Greek literature, art, or religion, and only as, at least externally, Greek were they at all widely accepted. It cannot be said that, prior to the Arab conquests of the seventh century, the captured Orient " took prisoner the fierce conqueror," as Greece had done towards the end of the Republic. Rather the undying spirit of Greece had seized on fresh instruments by which to act on the Western world, undergoing, it is true, some modifications in the process, but still quite recognizable. No Romans, unless, like Jerome, they had a special interest in the origins of Christianity, would learn the Aramaic language, or be readily brought into contact with the wild fancies of Oriental myths except in a much sobered Greek version. The Syrian cults which spread to the West had lost the extravagances which characterized the shrines of Hierapolis and Aphaca; and the gods had been sufficiently syncretized to pass without much violence as Jupiter, Apollo, or Venus. When a true Syrian worship was presented in an undisguised form, as by Elagabalus at Rome, it was received with laughter or contempt. Even in the case of Christianity it is almost certain, humanly speaking, that it would have remained an insignificant local sect if the genius of Hellenized Jews from outside Syria—Paul of Tarsus, Barnabas of Cyprus, Apollos of Alexandria, and many more—had not let fall the more exclusive features, asceticism, circumcision, and community of property, and formed its doctrine into a system capable of philosophical expression.

In law and politics the Orientals inclined to a centralized state with a carefully graded hierarchy of officials, placed under an absolute ruler and upheld by a professional army

who received allocations of land in return for their services. This had been the use of the later Seleucidae, and the same system asserted itself as the Roman empire progressed. It resulted in the withdrawal of local liberties and a development of uniformity on a large scale, such as has often been the aim of the eastern mind. It was not for nothing that the Syrian dynasty carried into effect a measure which had been overdue since the time of Augustus, and swept away the grades of privileges which marked off citizens and subjects, or again at a later date sought to subsume the heterogeneous cults of the empire under the sun-worship of Emesa. The first measure met with such success as was possible in a realm full of the most diverse races, and at a time when the breach between rich and poor was unusually wide. The second failed; but within a century another and far higher Syrian cult, with an emotional appeal of its own, had been found to satisfy the religious aspirations of the whole western world.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EASTERN EMPIRE

'Ανέστη ὁ ἐρημικώτατος 'Αμαλὴκ τύπτων ἡμᾶς τὸν λαὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ γίνεται ἡ ἐν Φοίνικι παντελὴς τοῦ 'Ρωμαικοῦ στρατοῦ τε καὶ στόλου ἀπώλεια, καὶ πάντων τῶν χριστιανικῶν λαῶν καὶ τόπων ἐρήμωσις.—THEOPHANES.

THE three centuries for which Syria was ruled from Byzantium instead of from Rome afford few materials for a connected narrative. Historians are mainly ecclesiastical, and their works deal primarily with church councils, and disputes about doctrinal matters or successions to bishoprics. In secular history there is a long series of wars with Persia, waged by the Romans chiefly with European troops which included a larger and larger barbarian element, wars usually centring round a few border fortresses of Mesopotamia. The object and issue of these struggles are both generally obscure. Neither side sought to make permanent conquests; both were ancient and highly centralized absolutisms, without that tendency to expansion which marks a new and growing state. Yet, partly perhaps to exercise their large mercenary armies, partly from commercial rivalry, which early in the fifth century caused a definite line of demarcation to be drawn between the trading areas of Roman and Persian merchants, few long periods elapsed, from the death of Constantine down to the ruin of both rivals at the hands of the Moslems, without an invasion of Persian Mesopotamia by an imperial army or a Persian foray in northern Syria.

That these hostilities had no great effect on the Syrian provincials is clear. Commerce, architecture, art, religious thought, and literature remained active through the fourth and fifth centuries; and there are few signs of that torpor and cessation of all public life which in the same period crept over the West. As the Romans had added little to local or national institutions, so the decay in what they had introduced was less far-reaching than in Gaul or Spain. It is true that municipalities were tending to a single type, and in some cases had been put under imperial chief magistrates; but the eastern mind is not unfavourably disposed to absolutism in the form of government. The towns were less dependent on private benevolence than in the West, and, except for a few of the largest, wealth was more evenly distributed. Archaeology has revealed the existence of a considerable class of small proprietors, subsisting on the produce of their own orchards and fields, or from its sale; and the odious system of serfage, which was wrecking agriculture in the West, was less widespread in Asia, where the feeling of Semitic peoples seems to resist the artificial distinctions of feudalism. The Church was an extensive landowner, and the resident priest, who acted as agent or steward for some see or monastery, was sometimes so important to the tenants that the years were dated by his incumbency.[1]

A decline did indeed come. The defence of the eastern frontiers was neglected or left to the care of tribes thought to be friendly; Syrian garrisons were employed in other regions where danger seemed more imminent; national unity was impaired by the growth of heretical sects which embodied the provincial reaction against Byzantine bigotry, and at last welcomed the more tolerant infidel. Yet, down to Justinian's reign Syria was one of the most flourishing

[1] Renan *Mission*, 614. He was called ἐπίτροπος or οἰκονόμος.

provinces. Its merchants could be found throughout the Mediterranean world. They still controlled the silk trade, and dealt in purple and woven fabrics; at Antioch luxury had hardly diminished. Syrian architects and sculptors exercised a marked influence on the late Hellenistic styles which it is customary to call Byzantine. Antioch, Edessa, and Gaza were still important literary centres ; more theologians were supplied to the Eastern Church than by any other country, and in Berytus there was still perhaps the greatest centre for the study of civil law.

It has already been said that, of the three sons of Constantine who divided the empire on their father's death, Constantius secured the eastern provinces; and he had soon to defend them against Persian aggressions, which revived after the removal of the great emperor. He met with little success in the field, but the enemy suffered so severely in attacking some of the fortified posts of Mesopotamia that, being also threatened by a Scythian invasion on the north, they agreed to a truce (A.D. 350). Constantius, on leaving for Europé, transferred the war to his lieutenants, and on his becoming sole emperor appointed his cousin Gallus as his representative in Asia. This prince and his wife, Constantina, accordingly took up their residence at Antioch, but their suspicious cruelty caused their administration to be regarded as a reign of terror. Spies and informers were rife, men of high station were murdered for the sake of their wealth, and tortures were constantly applied within the walls of the palace, both to the provincials and to the Caesar's own courtiers. Even Theophilus, the governor of Syria, was not safe from his intrigues. Having become unpopular with the citizens owing to a scarcity of food, he was murdered with the full approval of Gallus. Two commissioners sent from Constantius to inquire into the prince's conduct, partly, it is true, owing to their own rash-

ness, were given over to the rabble, who put them to death and flung them into the Orontes (A.D. 354). Gallus, however, lacked courage for open revolt. After his wife's death he was induced to leave Syria, and was eventually executed by the emperor's orders.

In A.D. 359 there was another Persian invasion of Mesopotamia, signalized by the heroic defence of Amida (Diarbekir) on the Tigris, vividly described by Ammianus. It was only carried by assault with fearful loss to the Persian besiegers. The progress of the enemy in Mesopotamia was, however, so alarming that Julian, the brother of Gallus, who had now become sole emperor, having already had considerable military experience against the Germans on the western frontier, resolved to take command in Syria in person. Leading over from Europe a large army, after a stay at Antioch, he set out in A.D. 363 for the Euphrates. After gathering further forces at Hierapolis, he crossed the river, intending to attack the heart of the Persian kingdom, and on the way, like Caracalla, visited the temple of the moon-god at Carrhae.

Armenia, being then under a Christian king, would lend only half-hearted assistance to the apostate emperor, yet Julian brought his army, over 65,000 strong, together with a powerful fleet, successfully along the Euphrates to Circesium. Here the Romans crossed the Chaboras into Persian territory. A toilsome march over the desert ensued, exposed to the attacks of Persian and Arab light cavalry. This brought Julian into Assyria, where after vigorous sieges two important towns were occupied, and he next established himself near the ruins of Seleucia, once a Macedonian colony, now merely a suburb of the Persian capital, Ctesiphon. An ancient canal, opened in Trajan's campaign, was dug out afresh to enable the fleet to be transferred from the Euphrates to the Tigris. The army

was then transported to the eastern bank of the latter, and in spite of fierce resistance advanced to the very gates of Ctesiphon. Julian's hopes of reinforcements were, however, disappointed, and he decided, instead of spending time over the siege of the capital, to advance into Media in order to force king Sapor to give battle. Most of the fleet, which was unable to follow, he had destroyed. The Persians laid waste the country in their retreat, and after many days' wandering the Romans were obliged to return towards the Tigris. Fierce attacks from horsemen, archers, and elephant corps attended their march, in the course of which Julian was mortally wounded by a javelin.

A Christian officer of the guard, Jovian, was elected by the Roman generals to take his place. and the Tigris was at last reached above Ctesiphon. At Dura it was decided to negotiate with the Persians, and the new emperor was compelled to accept humiliating terms. The five districts beyond the Tigris gained under Diocletian were surrendered, together with some of the strongest fortresses in Mesopotamia; after which, though not without many further sufferings, the remains of the army reached Antioch. During this intermittent struggle of four centuries both Romans and Parthians or Persians had proved incapable of any permanent occupation of the territory of their rivals.

Jovian's reign was short, and in A.D. 364 the empire was again subdivided, the eastern provinces falling to Valens, the others to Valentinian. Under Valens a fresh Persian war threatened in consequence of aggressions on the buffer states of Armenia and Iberia; but Sapor at last withdrew his pretensions, and they were left in a position of neutrality. During the residence of Valens at Antioch we have a curious example of the seriousness with which the government then regarded the practice of magic.[1] A number of

[1] Amm. xxviii. 1; xxix. 1-2.

Antiochenes arranged the letters round a magic tripod, in order to ascertain the name of the next emperor, and a ring placed in the centre moved round so as to point to the first four letters. These proved to be *Th, e, o, d;* and a certain Theodorus, an imperial secretary who was implicated in the affair, was put to death, while a general persecution of all who were suspected of like offences was carried out both at Antioch and Rome (A.D. 373).[1]

A more serious affair marked the year A.D. 387, when the ring had justified itself, and Theodosius sat on the throne of the East. Religious troubles were not yet settled, and taxation was increasing, especially in view of the donatives needed for the army on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the emperor's accession. The appeals and murmurs of the provincials were disregarded, and at Antioch the feeling against the imperial authority grew so strong that a mob ventured to tear down the bronze statues of the imperial family and drag them about the streets. The disorder was easily suppressed, but an anxious time ensued while the decision of the authorities of Byzantium as to the treatment of the city was awaited. It was only after severe punishments, and threats of reducing Antioch, as Severus had done, to the position of a village subordinate to its ancient rival Laodicea, that Theodosius was induced to overlook the offence. The time of waiting was partly filled by the delivery of Chrysostom's twenty eloquent addresses, still extant, "to the people of Antioch." The heathen rhetorician Libanius also exerted himself to bring about an accommodation.

A few years later, owing to wars in Italy, the imperial armies were withdrawn from the East, and the Huns made their first serious invasion. Descending from central Asia by the Caspian Gates, they passed through Mesopotamia

[1] Zos. iv. 13.

into Syria. Antioch was besieged,[1] the Tyrians sought refuge in their island, and many provincials were carried off captive (A.D. 395).

The provinces at this period were extensively subdivided. Phoenice fell into two halves, *Maritima* retaining the capital Tyre, and *Libanesia*, of which the chief towns were Damascus, Emesa, Heliopolis, and Palmyra. Coele Syria was also bisected, *Syria Prima* being left with Antioch, Seleucia, Laodicea, Beroea and Chalcis, *Syria Secunda* or *Salutaris* having Arethusa, Epiphania, and the capital, Apamea. There were also from the time of Arcadius three Palestines, the first covering Judaea, with the Philistine coast, the second Galilee and the Decapolis, with the capital, Sycthopolis or Bethshan, the third the ancient Arabia Petraea. Later still Justinian created from the coast districts of the two Syrias a new province, named from his consort *Theodorias*. Its capital was Laodicea.

Through most of the fifth century the danger from Persia, which was constantly menaced by the Huns on the north, pressed less on Syria than either before or after; but both Hunnish and Isaurian inroads troubled the northern districts. This was the period which saw the complete establishment of Christianity; and the imperial government, in close union with the Syrian Church, which had now abjured its heretical tendencies, though by no means suppressed the heretical sects, seems to have been more moderate and beneficent than when administered by such men as Gallus, or Rufinus, the oppressive prefect of Arcadius.[2]

[1] *Cf.* Jerome *Ep.* 60; Claud. *in Ruf.* ii. 33.

> Syriae tractus vastantur amoeni,
> Assuetumque choris et laeta plebe canorum
> Proterit imbellem sonipes hostilis Oronten.

Id. Eutrop. i. 250, Flos Syriae servit.

[2] *Cf.* Zos. v. 2.

To this age (probably about A.D. 470-480) belongs the curious legal code found in a Syriac version at Hierapolis, but apparently translated from a Greek original. Though derived mainly from the old jurists and imperial constitutions prior to Theodosius, it has some interesting Greek and Oriental characteristics. The style is not that of a lawyer, and the code, though designed to apply to Greeks and natives alike, seems to have been a gathering together of local customs in a form suitable for administration by provincial bishops. The subjects chiefly treated of, marriage and inheritance, were those over which the church exercised wide control.

The Greek features are somewhat difficult to account for. They resemble Athenian laws, and still more some Cretan codes, especially that of Gortyna, and may point to the retention of special Hellenic customs by settlers in Syrian towns right down from Seleucid times. Especially is this the case with inheritance. A quarter of the estate must be left to the children of the deceased, however undutiful, and the heirs must be free-born, not performers in theatres or mimes, charioteers, or with any other serious disqualification. In cases of intestacy the system is strictly agnatic. Contrary to the Roman rule, daughters' children are not to share with sons' children; and the mother and *cognati*, however close, rank after descendants of the father's brothers or sisters.

Great attention is paid to the wife's property, which included the *pherne* or dowry, given by her parents, the *doron*, that given by the husband, *zebda*, or adornments and furniture presented by the parents, and *schiadche*, similar gifts from the husband (together with food and drink at the time of the marriage). The wife had no control over the three last while the marriage lasted, but could claim them in case of separation or widowhood; and a widow

had a definite claim on her ornaments of gold, silver, and pearls. The husband's obligation would be greatest in the East, owing to the traditions of polygamy and more frequent divorces, and the custom of his making the bride extensive presents was widespread in Syria.

A few other eastern features appear. Palms and camels are mentioned, and demon possession is firmly believed in. Thus a seller could be forced to take back a slave found so afflicted, and a wife could be divorced. Many Greek terms and even some Latin found their way into the Syriac text, showing that Aramaic equivalents were lacking for several technical terms, and that Greek was sufficiently intelligible to the inhabitants. The bishop's "audience" was firmly established as an optional civil court from the time of Constantine, and especially in remote districts must have been in very general use for less complicated cases. As Nestorian and Monophysite communities tended to break off from the Greek Church and adopted Syriac as their ordinary language, this translation may have been deemed necessary; and in spite of its slovenly character it had a great future before it.

Under the Arab caliphs the old civil officials disappeared, but the Syrian Christians were left with their episcopal jurisdiction, the decisions of which were executed by the state. The code was translated into Arabic and Armenian, portions of which versions still exist; and it was generally applied among all Christian communities from Armenia to Egypt as late as the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. The fact that it already existed checked the extension in the East of the long and technical code of Justinian, which was ill suited to remote village communities. The code is not limited to private law, but has some curious moral and religious regulations. No public business or arrests were to take place on Sunday; ecclesiastical privileges are

defined; building regulations laid down, and rules given for raising the land-tax and for entering civil processes. Thus it may be regarded as a token of the forbearance shown by the Roman government towards local usage, in spite of the Constitutio Antoniniana of Caracalla, which designed to unify it. Tolerance was no doubt greater in the East, where a fairly high civilization had existed for ages, than in the half-barbarous provinces of Europe.

The reign of Anastasius (A.D. 491-518) saw some severe fighting with the nomad Arabs, who had begun to make inroads into Syria and Palestine, and a renewal of the struggle with Persia, now under King Cobades, aided by detachments of Huns and Arabs. During the interval of peace frontier fortresses had been neglected by the Romans, and Mesopotamia was now devastated, Amida falling after a fierce resistance. Edessa, however, held out, and Cobades, finding himself obliged to turn against other enemies, consented to restore his conquests in return for a large payment in gold. Anastasius began and Justinian completed the frontier fortress of Daras, not far from Nisibis, and the accounts of it that are handed down show that it was one of the best examples of early mediaeval fortification. It was surrounded by a double wall, into the space between which cattle from the neighbouring country could be driven in case of inroads. The inner wall was strongly fortified with towers and loopholes, and had galleries to shelter the defenders. A further protection was a double moat, and the water-supply was carefully provided for from a river running through the town. Justinian also strengthened Amida, Edessa, and other towns along the borders of Armenia and Mesopotamia; but the danger from the Arabs on the south-east was not yet fully realized, and there are few examples of Byzantine work in the line of forts south from Damascus and Bostra towards the Red Sea.

In A.D. 540, as a result of disputes between Arabs under Persian and those under Roman protection, came the great invasion of Syria under Chosroes Nushirvan. Hierapolis being too well fortified to invite attack, escaped destruction on payment of a ransom; much of Beroea (Aleppo) was destroyed, and the people, after taking refuge in the acropolis, were obliged to surrender from thirst. Antioch was carried by assault and almost annihilated; Apamea, Chalcis, and Edessa were despoiled of large sums. The Persian army proceeded to Asia Minor, and the imperial authorities, who, in pursuit of extensive schemes of conquest in the West, had left Syria almost denuded of troops, conferred the eastern command on Belisarius. This general, in addition to his triumphs in Africa and Italy, had met with some success in a short Persian war ten years earlier. His troops, Illyrian, German, and African, were not now numerous, but his great reputation induced the Persian king to abandon a contemplated invasion of Palestine, and Syria was recovered.

In A.D. 570 the Persians, still under the rule of the same Chosroes, carried their arms as far south as the Yemen in the Arabian peninsula, driving out the Abyssinian allies of Rome, while the Christians of Armenia, being oppressed by the Magi, also appealed for help to the emperor Justinus. Thus another Persian war ensued. Daras was besieged, northern Syria overrun, the ancient city of Apamea destroyed by fire. After a short truce the Persian and Roman armies met at Melitene in Armenia (A.D. 576), and victory inclined to the Romans. Their general, Justinian, penetrated into Assyria, and eventually to the Caspian, the furthest point ever attained by Roman arms.

Somewhat earlier an earthquake had devastated nearly all the Phoenician coast from Tripolis to Sidon, and this

is probably one of the chief reasons why the ancient remains of such towns as Byblus and Berytus are so insignificant.

Under the emperor Maurice friendlier relations between the two powers prevailed; but on the elevation of the usurper Phocas the last Persian war began, and resulted in the loss of all Syria and Palestine. The enemy was under the able king Chosroes Purviz, while the empire was troubled with internal dissensions and constant wars in Europe with the powerful Avars. It is clear that the Jews and persecuted Christian sects of Syria, such as Nestorians and Jacobites, contributed to the Persian victories, as they did a few years later to those of the Arabs; and the reconquest of the country (A.D. 622-627) can only have gratified the Catholics. A series of brilliant campaigns in Asia Minor, Armenia, and Persia, under the direction of the warlike emperor Heraclius, obliged Chosroes to recall his armies for the defence of his own kingdom; and, on the king's death in A.D. 628, a final treaty of peace was made with the empire, by which all conquests in Syria and Egypt were restored to it.

Five years later the Arabs, under the first successors of Mohammed, began to overrun Syria, approaching, as was to be apprehended, from the weakly held south-eastern frontier. Bostra was captured, and Damascus fell after a long siege (A.D. 635). Two pitched battles were fought at Ajnadain, of which the position is unknown, and on the Hieromax (Yermuk), east of the Sea of Galilee. In A.D. 636, just seven centuries from the first annexation by Pompey, the other chief towns of Syria were taken, and Heraclius abandoned the country, Palestine being also overrun. The conquest of Egypt and Persia soon followed, and it seemed for a time as if the whole eastern empire of Rome was about to be swallowed up by this last and greatest onset of the Semitic race.

CHAPTER IX

EARLY LITERATURE

Νᾶσος ἐμὰ θρέπτειρα Τύρος· πάτρα δέ με τεκνοῖ
'Ατθὶς ἐν 'Ασσυρίοις ναιομένα Γαδάροις.
εἰ δὲ Σύρος τί τὸ θαῦμα; μίαν ξένε πατρίδα, κόσμον,
ναίομεν, ἓν θνατοὺς πάντας ἔτικτε χάος.—MELEAGER.

THE Seleucid age had been from a literary point of view unfruitful. Syria could show nothing to rival the contemporary schools of Pergamum and Alexandria, and it is only towards the era of annexation by Rome that a small group of poets and philosophers begins to appear. Greek of a kind suitable for literary expression was very unlike the language spoken by the soldiers of fortune, merchants, Asiatics, or slaves, who thronged the great commercial centres. It had to be specially learned, and teachers of the higher learning were as yet few.

Yet the Graeco-Syrian race had a considerable aptitude for literature. If not strikingly original, they possessed versatility, a vivid imagination, appreciation of natural beauties, and a keen sense of the ludicrous or incongruous, which made them well fitted to compose epigrams or satirical works in verse or prose. Their power of improvisation in verse was especially noteworthy, a power which they shared with the Jews both of Old and New Testament times; and though in moral dignity and real poetical power they were far inferior to the Jews, they displayed a ready flow of imagery, a love of brilliant colouring, and

a freedom from pedantry which make them contrast favourably with the grammarian poets of Alexandria.

In the earlier period ANTIPATER, a native of Tyre, but chiefly associated with Sidon, who flourished at the end of the second century B.C., was one of the most noted poets of a somewhat unpoetical age. He was regarded as the first to adapt the habit of improvisation to the epigram, which by him is used chiefly for dedications and epitaphs, often epitaphs on the poets or heroes of ancient Greece. The language is ornate, with some bold turns, recalling the lyrics of the old poets whom he so much admired, yet in places betraying the artificial rhetoric of his own time. His metre is careful, and his poems are often imitated by his successors; for it was a habit among this school of poets for each to try and outdo his predecessors in the treatment of similar themes. In the course of his travels he made the acquaintance of L. Catulus, one of the first Romans to adapt the Greek elegy to the Latin language.

As an example of Antipater's epitaphs may be taken a Doric poem on Orpheus:[1]

> Orpheus, thy song no more shall draw the oaks
> Enraptured, nor the rocks, nor herds of beasts
> Free-ranging; never shalt thou still the rage
> Of storm-blasts, or the hail, or whirling snow,
> Or e'en the echoing main; for thou art dead.
> Full sore did Memory's daughters thee bewail,
> Calliope, thy mother, more than all.
> Why mourn, then, for our sons, since e'en the gods
> Save not their offspring from the law of death?

A more cheerful poem recalls Antipater's residence in a great Phoenician seaport:[2]

> 'Tis time the ship speed on; the ocean's breast
> No darkling storm with billowy furrows cleaves;
> Beneath the roof the swallow forms her nest,
> And o'er the meadows laugh the tender leaves.

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[1] *Anth. Pal.* vii. 8. [2] *Ibid.* x. 2.

Draw in your dripping moorings, sailors all,
And drag the buried anchors from the sands;
Haul up well-woven canvas at my call,
So Bacchus' son, the harbour's lord, commands.

The next two poets belong to the town of Gadara, a Macedonian colony planted among the Syrians of the Decapolis, and apparently bilingual. It stood on a rocky plain overlooking the gorge of the Hieromax, and under the empire was a city of great splendour. In the third century B.C. it had already produced the well-known cynic and satirist Menippus, whose works in mixed prose and verse, combining philosophical precepts, humorous allusions, and really poetical passages, powerfully influenced his countrymen as well as the Roman satirist Varro.

Of the two Gadarene poets Meleager and Philodemus, the former flourished just before, the latter just after, the Roman annexation. MELEAGER, a Syrian by race, and with some knowledge, at any rate, of Aramaic and Phoenician, as well as Greek,[1] was born about 135 B.C. Towards the age of twenty, desiring a better outlet for his talent, he migrated from Gadara to Tyre, then a semi-independent commercial state, largely Hellenized, but retaining some old Semitic religious rites. Greek literature had already been practised there with success; some philosophers had appeared, and the commercial aristocracy gave a ready welcome to those who could provide clever epigrams or epic declamations. Meleager does not indeed seem to have stood in need of a patron's assistance, but to have possessed independent means. His poems, though occasionally addressed as compliments to friends, were mostly composed for amusement.

The epigrams give some idea of the voluptuous life of a town still largely Asiatic in feeling, in spite of its admira-

[1] *Anth. Pal.* vii. 419.

tion for Greek literature. Singers and harpers, especially performers on the *pêktis*, a stringed instrument from the East, were popular in a society which loved to exchange pictures or poems and to drink sentimental toasts. Women of the better classes still lived in an Oriental seclusion, only walking out attended.

Meleager composed a work *Charites*, in a dialogue form, directly based on Menippus, apparently dealing in part with banquetings, and including some metrical parodies. The most influential of his contributions to literature was without doubt the *Garland*, or Anthology, a gathering of select poems from a great number of earlier writers, forming the nucleus of the existing Anthology. A proem by Meleager himself gives a list of the poets chosen, comparing the works of each to some beautiful flower or graceful tree.[1] This is one of the numerous tokens which may be noticed in Syrian literature of the admiration for nature which seemed inborn in a people constantly presented with the rapid alternation of dreary wastes and rivers overshadowed with brilliant and luxuriant vegetation. The common flowers of Greece are introduced, the iris, hyacinth, lily, crocus, myrtle, and blue cornflower; and besides some of the features of the Syrian landscape, the scented reed which grew in the neighbourhood of Lebanon and the Sea of Galilee,[2] the spikenard with shoots like ears of corn, the cyprus or henna,[3] and the soaring date-palm, taken as the type of the astronomical poet Aratus. Another striking little poem,[4] perhaps designed as a prologue to Meleager's amatory compositions, describes a garland of seven beautiful Tyrian children, offered by Love to Aphrodite, and compared respectively to the lily,

[1] *Anth. Pal.* iv. 1. [2] Strab. xvi., 2, 16; Theophr. *H. Pl.* iv. 8.

[3] Found near Ascalon, according to Plin. xii. 5. A sweet-scented oil was extracted from it.

[4] *Anth. Pal.* xii. 256.

wallflower, rose, vine-flower, crocus, thyme, and olive. Elsewhere he glances at the beauty of an Eastern night, "Mother of all the gods, fellow-roamer of revelry,"[1] at the bee, busy about the spring buds[2] and at other natural beauties, which he uses to set off his own often ill-regulated passions—

> Snowdrops and mountain-lilies bloom again,
> And the narcissus, lover of the rain;
> Zenophile, the fair, persuasive rose,
> The perfect flower in lovers' eyes, now blows.
> Why vaunt ye, then, your bright attire, ye fields,
> Since to no fragrant wreaths her beauty yields ?[3]

Meleager, like other Syrians, was given to travelling, and eventually settled in Cos, probably after the close of the first Mithridatic war. Here he composed his *Garland*, and devoted his later years to the study of philosophy.

The Epicurean philosopher and poet PHILODEMUS was one of the first of the Syrian school to establish himself in Italy, where he attached himself to the unprincipled L. Piso, the extortionate governor of Macedonia and a bitter enemy of Cicero. In the speech delivered against Piso in 55 B.C., Cicero, who, though making an exception in favour of his own admirer Archias, had a poor opinion of the Syrian nation,[4] violently assailed Philodemus, who openly professed the philosophy of pleasure, and by his flattery encouraged rather than restrained the passions of his patron.[5]

Some fragments of the Epicurean treatises have been recovered in the Herculaneum rolls; and portions of a work on music are extant, in which Philodemus denies the Stoic doctrine of the moral effect of music, but disapproves of its use as a mere accompaniment to games and dances.

Thirty short poems survive in the Anthology, mostly of

[1] *Anth. Pal.* v. 165. [2] *Ibid.* v. 163. [3] *Ibid.* v. 144.
[4] *Prov. Cons.* v. 10. [5] *In Pis.* xxviii. 68-69, and Schol.

an amatory character, which won for the author a passing mention in Horace,[1] and several imitations from Ovid.[2] The metre is careful and elegant,[3] with frequent bucolic caesuras. An example may be given of his poetical[4] and his philosophical[5] style:

THE COMING OF MIDDLE AGE.

With thirty gone before, seven years are sped,
And of life's book the leaves are half unrolled;
Grey hairs, Xanthippe, now bestrew my head,
Forerunners of an age that's wise and cold.
Yet revelry I love, and tuneful lays,
The fire yet burns in heart unsated still.
Come quickly, Muses, with the latest phrase,
O ye who guide my frenzy at your will.

THE NECESSITY OF DEATH.

"We all dwell in a city which has no bulwarks against death, and everything is full of what will bring it about. This is due at times to our physical constitution, our weakness, and all the ready means that there are for causing the life to be breathed out. So, too, our environment, if fortune wills, may produce countless occasions for our dissolution, in addition to the lawlessness and villainy of men. In spite of plagues and other causes of death, man does not expect it, but rather his unreflecting courses would make one think that he does not even despair of immortality. Thus he may be seen planting cypresses, or letting himself be hanged for two farthings, or laying the foundations of buildings that cannot be completed for a thousand years. Yet one could not deny that such behaviour is as if one thought that glass or earthenware vessels could remain unbroken when in perpetual contact with those of iron."

Three later authors of some note also belonged to Gadara. Theodore, a rhetorician who taught at Rhodes, and had the

[1] Hor. *Sat.* i. 2, 121.

[2] *Anth. Pal.* xii. 173, *Ars Am.* iii. 425; *Anth.* v. 132, *Am.* i. 5, 19; *Anth.* xi. 30, *Am.* iii. 7.

[3] Thus, like Meleager, he avoids shortening a long syllable *in hiatu* to form the second syllable of a dactyl.

[4] *Anth. Pal.* xi. 41.

[5] *Hermes*, xii. 223.

future Emperor Tiberius among his hearers;[1] Oenomaus, a cynic of the second century, from whose work against the oracles several fragments are preserved by Eusebius; and Apsines, a sophist and rhetorician of the third century. Oenomaus belonged to the school of Lucian, but had less wit; he decried any belief in the gods, or in divination, and ridiculed some famous oracles, especially those recorded by Herodotus. Apsines taught at Athens, and wrote a commentary on Demosthenes which is lost, but two of his rhetorical works survive.

It is somewhat remarkable that a provincial poet of very moderate attainments provided the occasion for one of the finest eulogies of the literary life ever produced. ARCHIAS was born at Antioch about 118 B.C. The city during the years following was much troubled by the internal dissensions which accompanied the decay of the Seleucid dynasty; and while still a youth he left for Asia Minor and Greece, winning great favour, especially at Byzantium, for his powers of extemporization. In this he rivalled his older contemporary, Antipater of Sidon,[2] whom, with Homer, and Leonidas of Tarentum, he seems chiefly to have studied.

It will be noticed that most Syrian writers of the age sought their fortunes at a distance from home, showing a wandering disposition which has been somewhat fancifully attributed to their nomad ancestry. The probable reason is that there was no large reading public at the time in Syria. The Seleucid kings were never great patrons of literature, the early Roman governors and officials still less, and the cultured middle class of older Greek towns was slow in appearing.

Whether he was of Greek or Syrian descent, Archias displayed considerable versatility, combined with a redun-

[1] *Cf.* Strab. xvi. 2, 29. [2] Quint. x. 7, 19.

dancy of style and a want of independence of thought and of perseverance. Thus he designed great epic works, but seldom completed them, and never apparently rose above the position of client to noble patrons.

After leaving Greece he received a ready welcome in the Hellenic colonies of southern Italy, and finally arrived at Rome in 92 B.C., in a period of internal quiet, when Greek studies were being actively pursued. He became closely attached to the family of the Luculli, the father and two sons, accompanying the first to Sicily with the intention of writing a poem on his conduct of the servile war. Lucullus, when banished from Rome, retired to Heraclea, and obtained for Archias the citizenship of that town. After the death of the father he remained on intimate terms with the sons, but had many other noble friends, and at one time contemplated a poem on the Cimbric war of Marius, but abandoned it on the fall of that general.[1] With a fellow-countryman, Antiochus of Ascalon, a philosopher, he followed L. Lucullus in two of his Mithridatic wars, and really did produce a Greek heroic poem on this subject, published soon after the recall of Lucullus under the Lex Manilia of 66 B.C. The poem is lost, but so many epic situations and miraculous events are included in Plutarch's life of Lucullus, in connection with this war, that the suggestion has been made that the biographer utilized the epic of Archias as well as the sober narrative of Sallust. The rival armies approaching each other in Phrygia were separated by a sudden explosion in the air, and a large silver luminous body fell between them. Twice cows voluntarily offered themselves for sacrifice. Persephone appeared in a dream to the town clerk of Cyzicus, encourag-

[1] Cicero's *Marius* may have drawn on the completed portion, as in the incident of the eagle killing the serpent, Cic. *de Div.* i. 48, 106; so Reinach.

ing the citizens to hold out against the attacks of Mithridates, whose engines were soon after shattered by a great storm. Lucullus, sleeping in a temple at Troas, had a vision of Aphrodite, who addressed him in epic language:

"Why sleep'st thou, high-souled lion? the fawns are near."

The poem seems to have covered the part of the war extending from the death of Nicomedes, when Bithynia was invaded by Mithridates, to the battle of Tigranocerta, and affords the first example of the celebration in Greek epic style of the exploits of a Roman.

Enemies of Lucullus soon after attempted an indirect attack by prosecuting his client Archias for a usurpation of citizen rights, but Cicero's eloquence apparently secured an acquittal (62 B.C.). The orator's enthusiasm on this occasion was due to the promise of Archias to write a poem on his consulship,[1] a work which never extended beyond a preliminary sketch.

The only extant remains of Archias are some epigrams in the Anthology, but it should be remembered that he was primarily an epic writer, and cannot fairly be judged on these *jeux d'esprit* alone. Several are on heroic subjects—Heracles and the Nemean lion, Ajax, the Calydonian boar; others are epitaphs on persons long dead, or descriptions of pictures, the language usually being epic in character and lacking the point of a true epigram. Archias tried his hand at a variation on the hackneyed theme of the offerings of the three brethren, fowler, hunter, and fisherman,[2] a subject which had become so wearisome by the time of Lucian that he tried to extinguish it with a coarse parody.

[1] *Pro Arch.* xi. 28; *cf. Ad Att.* ii. 16, 15: Archias nihil de me scripserit, et vereor ne, Lucullis quoniam Graecum poema condidit, nunc ad Caecilianam fabulam spectet (in honour of one of the Metelli).

[2] *Anth. Pal.* vi. 16.

The epitaph on Diogenes[1] may be taken as an average specimen of his style:

> Stern god who bring'st to Hades the bodies of the dead,
> E'en though thy bark be heavy with shades whose life is fled,
> Thy burden when thou guidest o'er gloomy Acheron,
> O suffer not to leave me, Diogenes, alone.
> I bring my staff and oil-flask, my scrip, and fare for thee
> Across the flood to bear me, my humble finery;
> This was my whole possession which dead I here display,
> And nought have I left yonder beneath the light of day.

A man of much greater intellect than the elegant triflers hitherto considered was the Stoic philosopher and historian POSIDONIUS of Apamea, who, like the poets, helped in the important task of educating the Romans and preparing the way for the splendours of the Augustan age. Born in the Seleucid treasure-city about 135 B.C., he studied at first under the distinguished Stoic Panaetius at Athens, and after the latter's death undertook an extensive series of travels, collecting information bearing on history, geography, and natural science in Italy, Gaul, Spain, Sicily, Dalmatia, and Illyricum. He became the head of a Stoic school in Rhodes, in which island he held high civic honours. The Rhodians were friendly to Rome in the first Mithridatic war, and in the course of an embassy to the city on behalf of his adopted state Posidonius visited Marius, then in his seventh consulship, with his fatal illness already upon him. Cicero, during his first and voluntary exile, with his usual eclecticism attended not only the Academic school of Antiochus of Ascalon at Athens, but the Stoics Molon and Posidonius. The latter received a number of distinguished Roman pupils, as Velleius, Balbus, Cotta; and Pompey, on whose exploits he wrote an historical work, twice visited him at Rhodes. Cicero vainly appealed to him, after the disappointment with Archias, to celebrate his consulship, and had eventually

[1] *Anth. Pal.* vii. 68.

to undertake that task himself. Later Posidonius settled in Rome, where he died in 51 B.C. leaving a large number of literary works, now surviving only in fragments.

Many were on moral questions, such as duty and fate; others scientific, as a treatise on the ocean and on meteorology; others were on heroes and Roman proper names. The most important book, one much used by later authors, as Livy, Strabo, Nicolaus, and Trogus, formed a continuation of Polybius down to his own time; and much attention was apparently given to the history of Syria under the later kings. The style is vivid and ornate, and Posidonius throughout shows much carefulness and clearness of observation, correcting the errors of his predecessors. The extant fragments, being preserved chiefly by Strabo and Athenaeus, are mainly descriptive, or deal with the habits of remote peoples, as in the account of the Bards and of the gladiatorial fights which amused Celtic banquets.

Two short specimens may be added, one on the luxury of Syrian towns, the other on some natural products.

After referring to the fertility of the country, in which luxury resulted from the ready supply of necessaries, he continues:

"There were many clubs in which they amused themselves continuously, using the gymnasia as baths, anointing themselves with expensive oil and unguents, and using the *schools*, for so they called the dining-halls of the members, as if they were their own houses, stuffing themselves there for the greater part of the day with wines and food, and even carrying off much besides, amidst the sound of noisy lyres, which made whole cities ring with the uproar."[1]

"Arabia and Syria also produce the persea, and what is called the pistachio. This bears a grapelike fruit with white shell, and of a long shape, so as to resemble a tear. They press against one another like vine-clusters; the inside is pale green, less well-flavoured than pine-cones, but more fragrant."

[1] Athen. xii. 527. [2] *Ibid.* xiv. 649.

Nicolaus of Damascus was born in the ancient capital of Syria in 64 B.C., and never sought to hide his origin, like many of his contemporaries, by having himself enrolled as citizen of one of the ancient cities of Greece. The son of a rich orator, Antipater, he received a good training in the Greek schools of Syria. Not only was his activity as a writer and speaker remarkable, but he succeeded in the perilous task of remaining the trusted secretary, counsellor, and frequently ambassador, of Herod the Great himself. In early life he had written tragedies and comedies; later he embraced the Peripatetic philosophy, and left a number of treatises, probably chiefly Aristotelian commentaries, one being directed against Epicurean views on religion.

The chief contributions of Nicolaus to literature were historical, designed primarily to give pleasure in an age which preferred bright narratives, full of speeches and vivid character drawing, to accurate research. A fragment of an autobiography remains, a collection of curiosities about remote peoples gathered from travellers' tales without much method, and some valuable portions of a life of Augustus, including the last years of Julius. It was based mainly on Augustus' own commentaries and on oral tradition, and contains several facts not otherwise known. His chief work was a universal history in 144 books, dealing in some detail with recent times, especially Jewish history, with which he had a first-hand acquaintance, drawing, for instance, on Roman decrees preserved in the Jewish archives. Appian and later writers utilized his historical works, and Josephus derived much from him, though accusing him of saying only what was creditable to Herod, and of seeking to justify the murder of Mariamne and her children.

An Indian Embassy at Antioch.

"I was present in Antioch by Daphne when the Indian ambassadors presented themselves to Caesar Augustus. Several were mentioned in the letter which they brought, but only three arrived safely, the rest having perished, chiefly owing to the length of the journey. The letter, written on parchment in Greek, stated that Porus was the writer, the lord of six hundred kings, but notwithstanding it was for him a thing of great moment to be a friend to Caesar; and he was ready to give him passage wheresoever he desired, and to afford him all the help that was becoming. Such was the purport of the letter, while there were also gifts brought by eight slaves clothed only in loin-cloths, and sprinkled over with unguents. The gifts consisted of Hermas, whose arms were cut off from the shoulder in childhood, whom we saw, and huge vipers and a snake ten cubits long, a river tortoise three cubits long, and a partridge larger than a vulture. There was also present with them the Indian who burned himself at Athens, a thing which some of them do owing to misfortune, seeking an escape from their present plight, others from prosperity, like this man, who thought that, having succeeded so far in everything, he should now depart, lest anything unwished-for should befall him if he lingered." [1]

It is now time to turn to the somewhat scanty contributions made by Syrians to Latin literature. It was natural that only those who came definitely to settle in Italy should learn the language sufficiently thoroughly to attempt literary work. In the province itself it was spoken only by officials, their attendants, soldiers, and a few merchants or other settlers; and till the establishment of the university at Berytus few facilities existed for learning Latin. Their love of wandering, however, took many Syrians to the West, and two or three attained some eminence in Latin literature.

M. Pompilius Andronicus [2] is now only a name. An Epicurean philosopher and grammarian, he kept a school at Rome early in the first century B.C. Being unsuccessful there he migrated to Cumae, where he produced several

[1] Nic. D. *ap.* Strab. xv. 1 *fin.* [2] Suet. *Gramm.* 8.

critical works. The most important was a commentary on the Annals of Ennius, which was later edited by the Orbilius of whom Horace had such painful memories.

A later contemporary was PUBLILIUS (or PUBLIUS) SYRUS, a native of Antioch,[1] who came to Rome as a slave, and attracted the attention of his master's guests by his witty remarks. Some of these are quoted by Macrobius,[2] but now seem rather flat; such as his answer to the question "When is leisure disagreeable?"; "When it is due to gouty feet." He was manumitted, received a good education, and turned his attention to the production of mimes. These little dramas had recently superseded Atellan fables and become widely popular with the middle and lower classes, though Cicero seems to think some excuse necessary for his own attendance at them.[3] They depicted scenes from common life, caricatured and exaggerated; women took part in the acting, and there was much coarse buffoonery and improvised jocularity, mixed with moral maxims and platitudes. The chief playwright of the day was a Roman knight, Laberius, who was, however, surpassed in popularity by the brilliant young Syrian, who toured the country, taking leading parts in his own work and utilizing the national gift of improvisation. In the public games exhibited by Caesar in 45 B.C. the dictator compelled Laberius, who had offended him by the freedom of his political allusions, to act in his own mime; and a kind of contest in improvisations seems to have taken place among the various competitors, in which Publilius was adjudged successful. Caesar, however, awarded a consolation prize to the disgraced Laberius, who by appearing in a public spectacle forfeited his status as *eques*, and presented him

[1] Jahn's conjecture, Antiochium for Lochium in Plin. xxxv. 199, is now generally adopted.

[2] ii. 7.

[3] *Ad Fam.* xii. 18.

with a gold ring, which was equivalent to a restoration of his rank.

No certain titles of the mimes of Publilius are preserved, and as they were in part extempore, probably only acting versions ever existed, and they were not published for ordinary reading like the plays of his rival Laberius. Though after the latter's death he was recognized as at the head of his profession, he still remained an actor.[1] His plays continued to be performed for a century longer, and are familiar to the Senecas and Petronius, but thenceforward he is mentioned only by grammarians, as Gellius and Macrobius, and the collections of *sententiae* from his works are open to considerable suspicion. Such collections were probably used as school-books, and sometimes varying versions of the same phrase occur, pointing to their having been compiled in part from memory. It is clear, however, from quotations in earlier writers that such *sententiae* were familiar at Rome; and their style, with balanced, sharply contrasted phrases, with which a mimus would seek to crush his opponent, is pushed to extremes in some Roman rhetoricians,[2] especially the younger Seneca. The metre is trochaic or iambic, and the Latinity on the whole pure, being called by Gellius elegant and well suited for ordinary discourse:

> An eloquent fellow-traveller is as good as a carriage.
> The lamentation of an heir is laughter under a mask.
> Thrift is well-reputed wretchedness.
> He who has more power than is proper wants more than he has.
> Patience too often provoked turns into fury.

The next Latin writer belongs to a century later, the learned grammarian and critic M. Valerius Probus, a native of the citizen colony of Berytus, and very likely of

[1] Cic. *ad Att.* xiv. 2. [2] Quint. viii. 5, 14.

Roman descent. He had at one time been in the army, and failing to obtain the office of centurion betook himself to studying old Latin writers. These had been brought to Syria by Augustus' settlers, and still received more attention than in the Rome which was dominated by the school of Seneca. He came to settle at Rome, where he did something to renew interest in ancient Roman authors, a revival which attained its height a century later under the guidance of another provincial Fronto. Learned editions, provided with commentaries, were published by him of Terence, Lucretius, Vergil, Horace and Persius; but much of his teaching, especially on grammar and old Latin, was oral, afterwards collected and published by his pupils, or took the form of letters.[1] He is mentioned by Martial[2] as still alive in A.D. 88, and numbered among his pupils the famous second-century grammarian A. Gellius.[3]

Most histories of ancient literature pass over with slight notice the collection of writings which has exerted far more influence on subsequent ages than all the Greek and Latin classics put together. Barbarous though the language of New Testament writers may be thought to be, with its awkward compounds and want of structure, it cannot fairly be regarded as the result of attempts by ignorant men to write in a foreign language. The centuries of Ptolemaic or Seleucid rule had made Greek a second mother-tongue to a great proportion of the inhabitants of Syria. Even in Palestine the Maccabean dynasty had been strongly under Greek influences, as is indicated, among other things, by the Greek names borne by several members of that royal house; and double Semitic and western names, of the type Simon Peter or John Mark, were very common. Discoveries of papyri originating with the humbler classes in Egypt

[1] Suet. *Gramm.* 24; *cf.* Macrob. v. 22, 9.
[2] iii. 2, 12.
[3] *Noct. Att.* i. 15, 18.

under the Ptolemies have proved that the dialect of New Testament writers is not an attempt at the literary Greek of the time, strongly coloured by Aramaic idioms, but a genuine specimen of the ordinary language of eastern non-Hellenic peoples. A greater or less degree of education is of course discernible. St. Luke, especially in the Acts, falls but little below the standard of such educated authors as Josephus; St. Paul, too, though too vehement and with ideas crowding on each other too fast to attain an elegant Greek style, had been trained in one of the chief universities of Asia. Hebraisms indeed occur, but chiefly in connection with Old Testament matters or local Jewish customs, just as a few Latin words[1] had crept into ordinary speech where a periphrasis would otherwise have been needed.

But a feature of these works, often lost sight of amidst their absorbing moral and religious significance, is the fact that they alone give an idea of the life and manners of a small state on the confines of the Roman empire, as they appeared to persons living in that society, who described it without any didactic intention. Their countryman Josephus, who also lived in Syria no great time afterwards, as a professed historian, dwells on military and dynastic questions, neglecting the common people, as most ancients are wont to do. In the New Testament we see an ancient Syrian community, now in theory under a client king, now under a procurator representing the Syrian legate, but practically a part of the Roman empire throughout. It was organized on ethnic or Asiatic rather than on municipal or Graeco-Roman lines; the whole people formed one community, with a central council, primarily of a religious character. It was hedged in towards the outer frontier by a series of native dynasties, " Herod tetrarch of Galilee and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis,

[1] *E.g.*, *κοδράντης, λεγεών, σπεκουλάτωρ, τίτλος, φραγέλλιον.*

and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene"; mixed Arabian and Aramaean communities, which the policy of the early empire preferred to entrust with the defence of Syria against marauding tribes, instead of establishing its own frontier fortresses. Beyond these was a real Arab dynasty, that of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans, whose ethnarch protected the ancient Aramaean city of Damascus,[1] which as yet lay outside the Roman province.

The garrison was a small one, performing chiefly police duties and suppressing local disorders, but needing help from the Syrian legions in a general outbreak. It consisted of drafts from these legions when the empire assumed direct control, but the client princes could employ their own mercenaries. Such were the German and Thracian bands in the service of Herod the Great.[2]

The complete supremacy of Rome is taken for granted,[3] despite the outbreaks of a few fanatics, in whom the old Maccabean spirit had degenerated into mere brigandage.[4] The emperor, however much he might hesitate to assume the regal title, was already a *basileus* to the provincials, and to his "far country" Jewish princes repaired to seek their titular sovereignties.[5] His procurator was fully on a level with the local royal families,[6] and sometimes intermarried with them.[7] Direct tribute was levied, besides custom dues, which were in the hands of publicani, who had already made their office a byword for injustice and extortion.

Externally quiet as things might seem, the national spirit was not yet broken, and a far-sighted observer might look to the time when the Jews should fall by the edge of

[1] II. *Ep. Cor.* xi. 32.
[2] Jos. *Ant.* xvii. 8, 2.
[3] Ev. Jo. xi. 48; xix. 15.
[4] *Act. Ap.* v. 36. Ev. Luc. xxiii. 19.
[5] Ev. Luc. xix. 12.
[6] *Ibid.* xxiii. 12; *Act. Ap.* xxv. 13.
[7] *Act. Ap.* xxiv. 24. Drusilla was a daughter of Herod Agrippa I. and had previously married Azizus, king of Emesa.

the sword and be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles.[1]

Indeed much that was Oriental still remained. There was little of western class-exclusiveness; all orders mingled in the open-air life of Asiatic towns and villages; all listened eagerly to strangers, and were ready to discuss religious questions with an unfeigned interest which would have been looked for in vain among peoples less absorbed in their national cult. For the annual festivals believers crowded from all parts to the central shrine, as the worshippers of the Syrian goddess came from far and wide to the spring gathering at Hierapolis, each bringing his own offering.[2] Supernatural powers were felt to be very close at hand; angels troubled the waters of the curative spring, exorcism for demon possession was widely practised; warnings by dreams were of constant occurrence. Yet there is nothing like the fantastic imaginings of the mainly or purely Oriental apocryphal gospels and acts, with their fire-breathing demons, descents to Hades, and flood of purposeless miracles.

Of Syrians outside Palestine not much is heard; the inhabitants of the Phoenician coast have the old name of Canaanite,[3] which was retained by their colonists in Africa as late as the days of Augustine. Antioch became one of the principal centres of the early Church, from which Asia Minor could readily be evangelized, and its inhabitants at this time discovered the most enduring of the nicknames which they so readily bestowed.[4]

The deserted area of the old Philistine cities is referred to;[5] and their famous god, Beelzebub of Ekron, who seems to have given oracles by directing the movements of flies, had sunk to the level of a demon,[6] and his town was desolate.

[1] Ev. Luc. xxi. 24.
[2] Lucian, *de dea S.* 49.
[3] Matt. xv. 22.
[4] *Act. Ap.* xi. 26.
[5] *Act. Ap.* viii. 26.
[6] 2 *Reg.* i. 2; Matt. xii. 24.

Communications with other towns were frequent, and the wide dispersion of Jews, who periodically returned for the great festivals, did much to break up the old national isolation. The Libertines, or freed prisoners who had returned from Italy, were numerous enough to form a congregation at Jerusalem; [1] a considerable colony lived under the Arabs at Damascus, others at Antioch, Caesarea, and most of the great towns. Persian fire-worshippers were occasionally seen; [2] lastly, the Essenes who lived along the shores of the Dead Sea, and whose doctrines John the Baptist may be thought to have shared, may represent the wave of asceticism initiated by the visit of Buddhist missionaries to Syria in the time of the Macedonian supremacy.

A few specifically Oriental customs may be mentioned; the fondness for anointing the head with oil or other unguent as a sign of festivity; [3] the use of amulets against witchcraft or the evil eye; [4] the frequent use of flutes and pipes, as at open-air dances,[5] or to accompany the wailing of hired mourners.[6]

The language is more heavily charged with metaphor than would be readily intelligible to a Western audience, and, as in the heathen poets, flowers are favourite means of illustration. The scarlet lily or martagon, the vine, fig, olive, and reed are all used as figures; and in one well-known passage [7] the seated multitude in their bright-coloured robes are compared to rows of brilliant flowers. The most obvious peculiarity of style is the abundant use of parable and simile. "It is habitual," says Jerome,[8] "for Syrians,

[1] *Act. Ap.* vi. 9.

[2] Matt. ii. 1.

[3] Matt. vi. 17; *cf.* Jer. *ad Matt.* i. 6: Juxta ritum provinciae Palaestinae loquitur, ubi diebus festis solent ungere capita.

[4] Matt. xxiii. 5.

[5] *Ibid.* xi. 17.

[6] *Ibid.* ix. 23; Chrysostom (*ad Ep. Cor.* i. 12) denounces similar noisy crowds at Antioch.

[7] Ev. Marc. vi. 40.

[8] *Matt.* iii. 19.

and especially Palestinians, to attach parables to all their addresses, that what cannot be borne in on hearers by a simple command may be realized through similes and examples." Two specimens may be added from later Syrian literature, one from the native, the other from the Greek section of it, to show how fully detailed such similes might be without, as would be expected, confusing the hearer or reader.

The Praise ot the Church.[1]

"Her tongue is the curtain which the priest raiseth and entereth in. Her neck is the lofty flight of steps which the first architect did build. Her hands both of them proclaim and point out the plan of life, and her ten fingers have opened the gate of heaven. Her bridal chamber is lighted up and full of the sweet odour of salvation. A censer is ready in the midst, love and belief and hope gladdening all; within truth dwells in humility. Her gates are adorned with truth; her groomsmen surround her; all whom she hath invited and her pure bridesmaids go before her, uttering praise."

Thoughts Good and Evil.[2]

"See we not that, if any has been caught in a city, he is judged as a spy? Then let us not only banish aliens, but let us drive out enemies also. If we see one let us deliver up to the ruler, that is, to conscience, that imagination which is indeed an alien, a barbarian, albeit tricked out with the garb of a citizen. For there are within us many imaginations of this kind, which are by nature indeed enemies, but are clad in sheepskins. Just as the Persians, when they have put off the tiara and the drawers and the barbarian shoes, and put on the dress which is usual with us, and have shorn themselves close and converse in our tongue, conceal war under their outward garb; but once apply the tortures and thou bringest to light what is hidden; so here examine by torture again and again such an imagination as this, and thou wilt quickly see that its spirit is that of a stranger."

The Jewish historian Josephus, our principal authority for Syrian history under the early empire, was born at

[1] *Acts of Thomas*, Wright's translation.
[2] Chrys. *Hom. in Act.* 37 (*Library of the Fathers*).

Jerusalem about A.D. 37, and claimed descent from the royal family of the Maccabees. Being well educated both in Eastern and Western learning, he proved both a successful historian and a man of action. At an early age he visited Rome to plead before Nero on behalf of some fellow-countrymen whom Felix had sent as prisoners. On his return, though feeling no confidence in the result, he was induced to take a command in the great revolt against Roman rule. After a vigorous defence of the town of Iotapata he was taken prisoner, and henceforth attached himself to the family of Vespasian, being present at the siege of Jerusalem and returning with Titus to Rome, where he composed the existing works and lived to an advanced age.

Besides a short autobiography he left two great works, the *History of the Jewish War*, and the *Jewish Archaeology* in twenty books, designed as a companion to the *Roman Archaeology* of Dionysius. Of the war Josephus had been an eye-witness, and his narrative, though naturally coloured by the desire to gratify his Roman patrons, forms our principal authority for the period. The *Archaeology* contains a history of the Jews from the Creation to the outbreak of the rebellion, dealing in great detail with the later Maccabean reigns, and those of Herod and his successors. There are fewer vivid descriptions in this book than the former; much of the earlier part simply repeats the story of the Old Testament in a style more intelligible to Gentiles than the Septuagint, while the court intrigues of the corrupt Idumaean dynasty are described at wearisome length. Yet it is a work which could ill be spared, and it does much to illustrate the policy of the early empire towards its client states and the East in general.

CHAPTER X

LATER LITERATURE

Οὕτως αὐτοῖς νοῦς τε ὀξὺς καὶ ῥήματα στρόγγυλα καὶ ῥεῦμα ἄπαυστον ὥστε πολλοὶ τῶν φιληκόων συνθέουσιν ὥσπερ εἰς μουσεῖα παιδευτῶν, ἐπ' ἀκροάσει τῶν παρὰ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν ἀγώνων, οὓς ἐκ τοῦ παραχρῆμα ἀνύτουσιν ἀσφαλέστερον τῶν ἐσκεμμένων.—LIBANIUS.

FROM about A.D. 100 to the age of Justinian the contributions of Syria to every branch of Greek literature were extremely important. Antioch became a great literary and rhetorical centre, and many other towns, such as Tyre, Berytus, and Gaza, attained distinction in various branches. Prominent among these was the sophistic school of rhetoric, which flourished chiefly in the second and third centuries, but had a few imitators in the fourth. Maximus of Tyre, Apsines of Gadara, Cassius Longinus of Emesa and, long after the others, Libanius of Antioch, are leading representatives of Syrian eloquence.

The Neoplatonist movement had an important forerunner in Numenius of Apamea in the Antonine age, and after definite form had been given to the creed by Plotinus, most of the later exponents, as Porphyry, Iamblichus, Isidore and Damascius, were Syrians, this union of Greek philosophy with eastern mysticism having proved congenial to the Semitic temperament.

Another Oriental feature, the love of fantastic adventure and extensive travels, is illustrated by the school of romance writers, whether heathen or Christian, extending from early in the second century to about the end of the fourth.

Heliodorus of Emesa is perhaps the chief Syrian representative, but enough remains of the *Babylonica* of Iamblichus, a native Syrian rhetorician, to give an idea of romance writing while at an early stage of development. The pleasure inspired by such love-stories induced Christian teachers, many of them converted rhetoricians, to attempt themselves moral romances turning on the trials and adventures of some apostle or saint. A few of these, such as the *Acts of Thomas*, display, amidst much that is fantastic and ill-connected, a real literary and poetical power.

In secular history the two chief names are Herodian, a Greek writer of the third century who shows himself particularly well-informed about Antioch and the members of the Syrian dynasty, and Ammianus Marcellinus, a native of Antioch, whose Latin work, partly historical, partly autobiographical, is one of the most important authorities for the state of the empire in the generation following Constantine.

A small group of writers, who used chiefly Latin, were connected with the law school at Berytus, or one of the other centres of legal instruction, such as Antioch and Byblus. The two chief were Papinian, a praetorian prefect under Severus and a kinsman of his consort Julia Domna, and Domitius Ulpianus of Tyre, a prefect under Alexander some years later. Considerable parts of the works of both these jurists were embodied in Justinian's Digests.

Christian literature, whether apologetic, hortatory, or historical, is strongly represented, as by Theodoret of Cyrrus, historian and theologian, Theodore of Mopsuestia, a native of Antioch and author of many scriptural commentaries, Eusebius, Sozomen, and Evagrius, historians, and, above all, Joannes Chrysostomus, a priest of Antioch and the most eloquent preacher of antiquity. Two offshoots of the ecclesiastical school are of some importance—the group

of Edessan writers who first made Syriac a real literary vehicle, and the Christian authors of Gaza, who about A.D. 500 attempted a last classical revival, leaving a number of speeches, letters, and poems in Greek, artificial indeed, but for their age showing considerable merit.

Two other writers are somewhat difficult to place, Herennius Philo of Byblus, a Euhemerist scholar of Hadrian's time, of whose important treatise on the ancient Phoenician religion long extracts have been preserved, and the famous satirist Lucian.

The field which might be covered is thus immense, and I only propose here to deal briefly with a few representative names.

LUCIAN was born about A.D. 125 at the royal city of Samosata in Commagene, being (as he is careful to point out in view of contemporary ignorance) a Syrian, not a Parthian or Mesopotamian.[1] Aramaic was his mother-tongue, and he was at first apprenticed to his uncle, a sculptor. Of this occupation he soon tired, though his works display more than an amateur's interest in art, and he has indeed been described as one of the best ancient art critics. Passing into Ionia, he received a thorough training in Greek literature and rhetoric, and returned to Syria to take up the position of an advocate at Antioch. However, anything of a routine character soon wearied him, and after for a time composing speeches for others to deliver, he, like his contemporary Apuleius, adopted the profession of a travelling lecturer. He visited Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Italy, and Gaul, and in the last obtained a chair of rhetoric, probably at a town in Narbonensis, where the civilization was largely Greek. The *Nigrinus* would suggest that during these travels he visited Rome, where he formed a very unfavourable idea of the

[1] *Quom. hist.* 24.

luxury and arrogance of the aristocracy. After further visits to Syria he settled, about the age of forty, at Athens, where he composed most of the existing dialogues and treatises in a style which is one of the best examples of the revived Atticism of the Antonine age, based on the language of later Attic comedy, but free from any tendency to purism or pedantry. About the time of Commodus he obtained an imperial procuratorship in Egypt, where he seems to have died.

Lucian thus, in an age when communications were easier than at any time till within the last hundred years, had some experience of the greater part of the Roman empire; and to the Syrian love of wandering he added Syrian versatility, allied to a certain shallowness and superficiality. His Greek training made him despise the superstitions of his countrymen, but did not supply in their place any higher creed or philosophic insight. As a moralist he inclines to a moderate Epicureanism, combined with something of the mild and humorous Cynicism associated with the name of Menippus; but his aim was more to destroy than to build. The object of many of his pamphlets and dialogues is merely to amuse with personal reminiscences, humorous conversations, or parodies; but in others the satirical motive is stronger. Religious impostors like Alexander or Peregrinus, dogmatic philosophers, Olympian gods, lying travellers, charlatans, and ill-balanced enthusiasts of every kind are in turn the victims of his caricature. The bias of a rhetorician is visible in the straining after point and epigram, and the absence of true feeling. Lucian displays a general disbelief in human nobility and virtue, recalling at times the manner of Rabelais and Swift, an attitude which, though it may be of service in an age encumbered by survivals and shams, can lead to no real reform of manners, nor provide a base for the reconstruction of beliefs or morality.

The treatise *De dea Syria* is our most important authority on the native religion of Syria in Roman times, more so than either the *Phoenician History*, which Philo of Byblus professed to have translated from an old Phoenician writer, or the valuable chapters of Macrobius. Its authenticity has been often doubted; the dialect is Herodotean, and, while the author styles himself an "Assyrian," the tone of unquestioning simplicity with which are retailed the absurdities of an old native cult, less sophisticated than those more immediately under Greek influence, has been thought alien to the satirical manner of Lucian. Recent scholars, however, hold that we have here a supreme example of his irony. A straightforward exposition of the ludicrous or discreditable rites which accompanied the worships of Atargatis at Hierapolis and of Adonis at Byblus is far more damaging than any satire. When we remember that Lucian's youth in Commagene, a backward part not very far from Hierapolis, must have been familiar with these rites, it is possible to explain the scepticism which in later life made him regard all manifestations of religious feeling, Greek or Oriental, as mere hypocrisy.

Two short specimens may be taken, one on the pantomimists of Antioch, recalling Lucian's sojourn in that city as a pleader,[1] the other about the river Adonis, the mythical and the real explanation of the phenomenon being amusingly balanced against each other.

"The men of Antioch, that most elegant city, which attaches such high importance to dancing, observe everything that is said or that happens so carefully that nothing ever escapes the notice of any of them. Thus, when a short dancer came on, and danced in the part of Hector, all cried out with one voice: 'You are As-

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[1] It has been conjectured (*Essays, &c., presented to Wm. Ridgeway*, p. 180) that Lucian's stay at Antioch coincided with that of L. Verus, and that the *de Saltatione* was composed for that emperor, whose devotion to mimes and dancers is notorious.

tyanax, but where is Hector?" Another time, when a man of unusual stature was trying to dance Capaneus, and to assail the walls of Thebes, they said: 'Walk over the wall; you have no need of a ladder.' Also, when a big fat man was trying to take great leaps, 'Please,' said they, 'take care of the stage.' Contrariwise they cried to a very thin one, 'Get well again,' as if he were sick. I recall these stories not as jests, but that you may see how even whole peoples esteemed dancing highly, so as even to be able to define what was noble in the art and what unbecoming." [1]

"There is also another marvel in the territory of Byblus: a river flows from Mount Lebanon to the sea; the name given to the river is Adonis. Now the river turns to blood every year, and after losing its ordinary colour falls into the sea and reddens much of the waves, and gives a signal to the Byblians for their laments. Now they tell how on these days Adonis is wounded on Lebanon, and that his blood, passing into the water, transforms the river and gives its name to the stream. This is the story of the common people. But a certain man of Byblus, who seemed to speak truthfully, told me of another cause of the phenomenon. He said as follows: 'My friend, the river Adonis goes through Lebanon; now Lebanon has a very yellow soil. Therefore violent winds springing up on those days bring down the earth, which is as though full of red ochre, into the river, and the earth renders it red like blood. The cause of the appearance is not the blood which they speak of, but the soil.' This was the story that the Byblian told me; but, even if he spoke the truth in this, the coincidence of the wind seems to me of a surety divinely appointed." [2]

If Lucian is a sophist who mocks at sophistry, his younger contemporary, MAXIMUS OF TYRE, who was also a travelling lecturer and sophist, takes himself and his profession very seriously. Like so many Syrians, he had travelled widely; he knew Phrygia and the shrine of Aphrodite at Paphos; he had more than once visited Rome, where he resided in the time of Commodus and delivered some of his addresses, and had seen the square stone which embodied the chief deity of the Arabs.[3] Maximus agrees with most sophists of the age in making a great parade of philosophical learning. The school which he affected was primarily the Academic, but the doctrines of other schools are worked

[1] *De Saltat.* 76. [2] *De dea Syr.* 8. [3] viii. 8.

in, and in some respects he foreshadows the Neoplatonism of the next century. Thus the theory of demons, or intermediaries between God and man, is much dwelt on, though not in a very illuminating way. Such guiding powers as the familiar spirit of Socrates[1] he considers to be manifestations of the same agencies as those which operated in oracular caves and temples, or as the gods who helped Homeric heroes. He is, however, a professional rhetor or lecturer, rather than an original thinker. The style of his forty-one surviving dissertations is showy and carefully balanced, with many similes and poetical excerpts; and his view of the function of philosophy is that it should be primarily a moral training for the young, its speculative value being overlooked.

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE PHILOSOPHER.[2]

"If anyone considers philosophy to consist in words or expressions, or the art of language, or refutations and methods of argument, or sophisms, and the study of such things, it is not hard to find a teacher. Sophists of this kind throng every place, are easily come at and quickly sighted. In fact, I would venture to assert that there are more teachers than learners of such philosophy. If, however, this forms only a small part of a philosopher's equipment, such that it is disgraceful to be ignorant of it, but nothing glorious to know it, let us avoid the disgrace by possessing this knowledge also, but not pride ourselves thereon. Otherwise the schoolmasters would be most important persons when they busy themselves about syllables, and lisp along with their foolish herd of children. But the main object of philosophy and the road by which it is attained require a teacher who helps to elevate the souls of the young, putting their ambitions through a severe training and applying pains and pleasures which exactly correspond to their appetites ; just as you know trainers do, who neither crush the spirit of their colts nor allow them to exercise their mettle too unrestrainedly."

LIBANIUS, the most voluminous of the Syrian rhetoricians, was typical of his class, which was then disappearing before the advance of the Church. He travelled widely,

[1] xiv. and xv. [2] vii. 8.

studied old classical models, had enthusiastic disciples, and deserves all the credit that can be given for versatility, pure and elegant language, and a virtuous disposition, apart, however, from the genius which goes to make a real orator or philosopher.

A native of Antioch, born in A.D. 314 under Licinius, emperor of the East, he was brought up at a country house in the neighbourhood, and continued in the speeches of later life to express admiration for landscapes and shady trees. At an early age he devoted himself seriously to study, neglecting the delights of chariot-races, theatres, and gladiatorial shows. After some further classical training at Athens, he set up a rhetorical school at Constantinople, the new imperial capital. For some time this met with success, but being assailed by the envy of rivals, who trumped up against him a charge of magic, he was obliged to leave, and taught subsequently at Nicaea and Nicomedia. At the age of forty he returned to Antioch, where for nearly forty years longer he remained active as teacher, orator, and statesman; and was regarded as the first rhetorician of Syria, becoming the honoured friend of emperors and high officials.

In spite of his wide influence over his contemporaries and his large classes, which at one time numbered eighty pupils, Libanius lived much in the past. He disliked Christianity, both as impious in itself and as the enemy of true culture, and felt much pain when one of his most promising pupils, the future patriarch Chrysostom, deserted the gods of Greece, and induced two of his companions to do the same. He chose to remain ignorant of Latin, even requiring an interpreter to read a letter;[1] and this seems to have been not unusual in the fourth century, even with men of high rank, in the eastern provinces. Similarly,

[1] *Ep.* 923; *cf.* 956.

while dwelling on every benefit conferred by Seleucid kings on his beloved city, he almost ignores the more numerous monuments of Roman emperors and governors, and seldom introduces any reminiscences of an author later than the Greek classical age.

From Libanius something may be learned of the educational methods of the time, a subject about which we are singularly uninformed in the earlier period. Rhetors, who had most of the higher education in their hands, in the smaller Syrian towns were elected by the community, in cities by the local senate, or occasionally nominated directly by the emperor; but they were seldom natives of the place where they taught. The professor was expected both to teach and to declaim by way of example, and to exercise some control over his disciples, who might be as young as sixteen, and often came to attend a distinguished teacher from distant provinces. The younger of them would also be attended by special *paedagogi*. At Antioch the classes began early and lasted till noon, but the courses only extended over the winter and spring months, much of the rest of the year being occupied with the long-drawn festivals.

The teaching profession had some definite organization. Colleagues could represent a sick teacher, and the pupils of one might have their course varied by being taken to hear the declamations of another teacher, or of one of his scholars. Official rhetors at Antioch were endowed by the town with an estate of their own, and received payments from pupils besides immunity from local dues; but their position in the fourth century was less good than previously. In some towns imperial chairs existed, the endowment being provided out of national funds. Rhetors were united into corporations, of which three existed at Antioch, each under its own president.

Classical Greek authors were extensively studied, Latin but little, and seldom by any except those who wished to enter the civil service of the empire; even then a knowledge of Latin administrative formulae combined with shorthand was usually sufficient. If any further study of Latin was required it might be necessary to go to Rome for it, and it was to obviate this necessity that a governor, referred to in ungracious language by Libanius, opened a school of Latin rhetoric at Antioch. Logic was very important, Aristotle, since the time of Porphyry, having recovered much of his ancient authority. Several of the heresies of the period, as that of Arius, who himself went through the educational system of Antioch, and of the Syrian Nestorius, seem to result from the attempt to force into logical formulae truths which were in reality beyond the grasp of human intellect. The rivalry of Berytus also caused Antioch to provide courses in jurisprudence,[1] but the school never attained the celebrity of that in the Phoenician city.

Students of Antioch frequently had the opportunity of hearing distinguished orators from other parts who came to deliver panegyrics on the emperor or other dignitaries. Yet the luxurious and turbulent city was not an ideal place of study; festivals and games provided constant interruptions, and students were often led into joining in the riots with which Antioch was periodically convulsed.

Among the scholastic works of Libanius is a series of arguments prefixed to the speeches of Demosthenes. A very large collection of letters also exists, addressed to distinguished persons of the time, Christian or pagan; but the most valuable part of his literary output consists of speeches and declamations. Some are mere oratorical models on mythological or fictitious subjects, but many

[1] Lib. *Ep.* 209.

were actually delivered on public occasions. In spite of some affectation and an undue emphasizing of trivial details, they are of value from illustrating the conditions of the age, and showing a true local patriotism, which characterizes the works of many provincials as the unifying influence of the empire began to lessen. There is also visible a determination to defend the weak and oppressed, and a conviction of the truth and beauty of much of ancient art and civilization.

In the Byzantine age Libanius was looked on as one of the first representatives of Hellenic eloquence, and though in purity of style and persuasive power he must rank below the least of the Attic orators, the neglect into which he, in common with so many Greek writers of the empire, has fallen should be a matter of regret.

Among the more important speeches may be mentioned a panegyric (xix.) on Julian, after the news of his death had arrived. The pagan emperor had already been known to Libanius during the latter's residence at Nicomedia, and was closely associated with him during the last months at Antioch before the fatal Persian expedition. No. xxviii. contains a protest against the destruction of the temples, which he attributes to monkish fanaticism; xi. is a fine eulogy of Antioch. In this the healthy and beautiful position of the city is described, the fertility of the surroundings, the legends which associated its early history with Greek, Persian, and Macedonian kings and heroes, the gradual growth under Seleucid rule, the nobility and eloquence of the senate. The beauty of the suburbs is enthusiastically dwelt on, the lower slopes of the mountains covered with rose-gardens, vineyards, and trees full of singing birds. Porticoes, palace, baths, hippodrome, and other public buildings were all splendid. Even the artisans' quarters had their places of amusement; the market was

always accessible; and the brilliant lighting of the streets enabled business to be carried on by night as well as by day.

Near the end of the speech Libanius turns to Daphne, with its temples of Apollo and Zeus, its groves of tall cypresses, shady paths, and running streams, "the purest gift of the queen of Nymphs." Besides these were baths and houses of rest and refreshment, with trailing vines overshadowing the windows; and the famous Olympian racecourse. The temples and the legendary associations of the place made "the very gods feel one's companions." A sadder note is that of the sixtieth Oration, a threnody on the ruin of the beautiful temple of Apollo during the visit of Julian, a note which recalls the despairing lines brought back to the same emperor as the last Pythian oracle, from the fallen shrine at Delphi.[1] After mentioning how the fierce Persian king himself once cast away his torch and worshipped Apollo when he came to Daphne, and describing the temple as a harbour of refuge provided by nature itself within another harbour, the sacred grove, he dwells on the splendour of the statue of the god, his tunic held up by a golden girdle, and his harp, whose sounds might sometimes be heard at midday. Then he passes on to the scene when the news came that the shrine was in flames:

> "The wayfarer cried out as the blaze rose up, and the loved dweller in Daphne, the priestess of the god, lamented. Beatings of breasts and bitter cries speeding through the bosky groves penetrated to the city amidst terror and dismay. The eyes of the emperor were but just tasting sleep, but he leaped from his bed with accents of grief and hurried on in frenzy, as though on the winged sandals of Hermes. He advanced to seek the cause of the evil, blazing within no less than the temple, while the beams swept down bearing flame with them, consuming all that stood nearest; first Apollo, who rose almost to the roof, then other things too: the beautiful figures of the Muses, the founder's statues, flashing jewels,

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[1] Cedren. i. 522.

noble columns. The throng of men stood round lamenting, unable to give succour, like those who look on a shipwreck from land, whose only help is to weep at what befalls. Verily the Nymphs, starting from their founts, raised a great lamentation; great, too, was that of Zeus, enthroned hard by, on seeing the honour of his son thus overthrown; great that of the countless company of deities that dwell in the grove. Nor less a wailing did Calliope raise in the midst of Antioch, when the chorus-leader of the Muses was violated by the flames."

One of the correspondents of Libanius[1] was AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, a native of Antioch, born of a noble family which claimed Greek descent, about A.D. 330. He may be looked on as the last ancient writer in Latin really deserving the name of historian, and was one of the few Roman soldiers who have left records of their experiences. He first appears on the staff of Ursicinus, a cavalry commander, at Nisibis in Mesopotamia in A.D. 353, accompanied that officer to Italy and Gaul, and fought under Julian against the Germans. He was with that emperor during his stay at Antioch and in the invasion of Persia; and at various times visited Egypt, Sparta, and Rome, where he recited part of his history. This work covered the whole period from Nerva to the death of Valens (A.D. 96-378), but only the record of the last twenty-five years remains. Ammianus had read widely and is fond of rhetorical ornament, but gives the impression of one who used a foreign language with a certain effort. His Latin abounds in metaphors and harsh inversions, perhaps due to imitations of Tacitus, whose works he designed to continue. On the other hand the matter of the history is extremely important, both from the vividness of many of the scenes and from the clear recognition of the evils which were already threatening the empire with dissolution. The army was unreliable and full of barbarians, the provincials were burdened with heavy taxation, almost

[1] Lib. *Ep.* 983.

the whole power was in the hands of oppressive and self-seeking military and civil officials; and emperors, whether Christian or pagan, had not learned the lesson of toleration. Rome itself he liked no better than Lucian had done. The Romans, he felt, had lost their many good qualities, were luxurious, and devoted to games of chance. Ammianus was a pagan of a somewhat indefinite kind, and his chief object of reverence was fortune or fate, which expressed its will through prodigies, omens, and auspices. He condemns the *anilis superstitio* which had then invaded Christianity and the fierce rioting which attended the elevation of Damasus to the papacy, but regrets Julian's intolerance of Christian teachers of rhetoric and literature.

For the history of Syria in the fourth century the work is valuable. Many nationalities, Goths, Moors, Egyptians, Persians, Huns, are passed in review, but the narrative constantly reverts to the author's home; and in spite of his admiration for Julian he admits that he added much to the truth in his bitter satire on the people of Antioch. One of the earliest references to the city is where he describes the vagaries of the dissolute Caesar Gallus, who kept spies to listen to the conversation at aristocratic clubs, *circuli honoratorum*, and accompanied by a few men secretly armed, wandered about at night along highways and into shops, asking passers-by in Greek what their opinion of the Caesar was.[1] This was all the more foolish, as he was certain to be recognized "in a city where the brightness of lights that burn all night imitates the clearness of day." Ammianus recalls the famous incident of the Persian attack on Antioch a century earlier,[2] when the people were gathered to watch the mimes in their rock-built theatre. A male and a female actor were improvising in the Syrian fashion on a given subject, and all eyes were fixed on them, when

[1] xiv. 1. [2] xxiii. 5.

the woman perceived the Persian javelin-throwers gathered on the cliff. As if part of her speech she cried, " If I am not asleep the Persians are here," a remark followed by a shower of darts, the flight of the audience, the pillaging and burning of the town. In a geographical digression[1] he speaks enthusiastically of several cities—Antioch, " known to the whole world, unmatched for its resources internal or brought from abroad," Tyre, "excelling in the beauty of its situation and the distinction of its citizens;" Palestine, with fertile fields, famed cities, and healing springs; Roman Arabia, with " a rich variety of commerce, strong camps, and forts to repel inroads, and walled cities such as Bostra, Gerasa, or Philadelphia." Elsewhere there are vivid accounts of the siege of Amida by the Persians; of the ascent of the Mons Casius by Julian, when he learned of the discovery of the long-sought Apis; of the wailing of the women for Adonis at the time of his arrival in Antioch; of the gluttony of the barbarian soldiers who were allowed to eat the sacrifices; the burning of the Daphne shrine; even the nicknames which the irritated citizens conferred on the unpopular emperor (such as Monkey, in allusion to his beard, or Butcher, to his sacrificial zeal). Such incidents afford a striking contrast to the dry narrative of most annalists of the age.

Neoplatonism was the chief contribution of the Greek world to thought and learning between the end of the classical age and the general adoption of Christianity. The third century and the first years of the fourth were its most flourishing period, and then lived its three chief exponents, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, the two last of Syrian birth, and, like many Syrians, showing more ability in interpreting and developing than originality in evolving dogma.

It may be described as an idealist religious philosophy,

[1] xiv. 8.

contrasting with the materialism of both Stoics and Epicureans, but adapting itself to most schools of religious thought by taking over and developing Plato's theory of spirits or demons, intermediate between mankind and the one supreme God. Its ethics differed little from those of the Stoics, but the virtues of a speculative life were more insisted on, and emphasis was laid on the subjective side of existence. The real object of the philosopher was to free himself from his enslavement to matter, that the soul might at last become conscious of the Absolute, or one supreme Deity. After a number of cleansing processes he might thus enjoy for a time close union with Him, and his state of mind would then pass beyond logical cognition, in a manner analogous to the immanence of Eastern philosophy. The highest and best way of attaining to this ecstasy was through abstinence and self-discipline, but the more mystical Neoplatonists tried to produce the same effect by recourse to theurgy or magic, which brought the mystic into connection with the demons, or emanations from the divine. These demons are the gods of popular religion; they stand in different grades, but have no special qualities or attributes apart from a general beneficence and a continued hostility to the demons of matter.

Such being, roughly, the views of the Egyptian Plotinus, his disciple PORPHYRY, who edited his master's works, proceeded to expound them. He was a Tyrian by origin, born in A.D. 233, and was originally called Malchus, the Hebrew *Melek* or king, but changed this for a Greek name recalling the purple robe of royalty. He studied at Athens under the famous rhetor Longinus, and later under Plotinus at Rome. He strongly opposed the magical processes and incantations practised by some of the school, preferring the Neopythagorean tradition, as expounded by such teachers as Apollonius of Tyana, holding that abstinence and asceti-

cism would enable the philosopher to attain the necessary clearness of thought, though these might not be desirable for the more active professions. Animal sacrifice is likewise condemned. Porphyry wrote against both Christians and Zoroastrians, and endeavoured to prove the admissibility of traditional religion by means of the allegorical interpretation of myths, which, unlike the ancient philosophers, Neoplatonists sought to protect rather than overthrow. Besides the edition of Plotinus' *Enneades*, his own works were numerous; but only a small proportion remain, as lives of Pythagoras and Plotinus, a treatise on Abstinence, an Introduction to the Intelligible, with a careful classification of the virtues, an allegorical interpretation of the description of the Nymphs' Cave in the Odyssey,[1] and an introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*, which in a Latin version exercised a wide influence on mediaeval logic.

" So also the Persians initiate the mystic with a mystical representation of the descent of souls and their reappearance, calling the place where this is done a cave. The start was made, as Eubulus says, with Zoroaster's natural cave in the mountains adjoining Persia, which was covered with flowers, and possessed springs of water. This he consecrated in honour of Mithras, the maker and father of all things, the cave being an image of the world which Mithras created, while the things within it, with corresponding intervals, offered types of the elements in the world and its regions. After Zoroaster it became habitual to others to carry out their rites by means of caves and grottoes, natural or artificial. For as they set up to the Olympian gods temples and shrines and altars, to earth-powers and heroes altars of burnt-offering, to the infernal deities they devote trenches and underground hollows; so they consecrate to the World caves and grottoes, and likewise to the Nymphs, owing to the waters that flow down or spring up in caves."

IAMBLICHUS, a disciple of Porphyry, was born at Chalcis, a city to the east of the Orontes, where he taught and wrote in his later years. He further developed the views of Plotinus in a mystical direction, showing that Pythagorean-

[1] 13, 103.

ism was their original source, and analyzing carefully the various stages of emanation from the divine according to a system of triads. The speculations of his predecessors are given a more definitely religious turn, reason now becoming largely subordinated to faith, so that the philosopher rises superior to all earthly interests.

Some marvels are related of Iamblichus, and certain of his disciples engaged in magic. Thus Sopater was executed under Constantine, on a charge of putting a spell on the winds. These magical tendencies, however, were gradually absorbed by various Gnostic or Manichaean sects, or by the remains of the old paganism. The Neoplatonists of Alexandria, and (when in the fourth century the Academy became Neoplatonist) of Athens also, returned to genuine philosophy, especially to commentaries on the ancients, inclining to make Aristotle at least an equal of Plato's.

The chief surviving works of Iamblichus are a treatise on Pythagoreanism, of which five books remain, an introduction to philosophy, especially that of Plato, and some arithmetical treatises, in which there is much on the mystic powers of numbers.

The composition of ROMANCES of love or adventure was an offshoot of sophistic rhetoric. They sometimes, as the life of Apollonius of Tyana, deal with the experiences of an historical personage, adding and embellishing, and taking any opportunity of describing the manners and curiosities of the places which he visited. More often characters and incidents are purely imaginary; a hero and heroine are carried over vast tracts of country, are separated from each other for long periods, carried off by pirates or brigands, exposed to dangers from magicians, tribes which practise human sacrifice, or Oriental tyrants; only to be reunited at the end in perfect happiness. Though Syria and Asia Minor were the principal centres for such productions, it is

easy to overestimate the Oriental element in them. The type of society depicted and the personal names are almost wholly Greek. While magic and necromancy are common, the hideous afreets and djinns of Eastern imagination, and miraculous transportations to remote parts, are wanting. It is true that such romances would be most likely to be popular in the story-telling East, which never developed the drama to the extent of European peoples, and delighted in improbable tales of travel and adventure; and similarly the mingling of nationalities in these eastern provinces, frequented by merchants and travellers from India, Arabia, Babylon, and Ethiopia, who here met the inhabitants of the Greek-speaking world, would supply the bases of many strange legends.

The longest and in some ways the best of the heathen romances is the *Aethiopica* of HELIODORUS. The author describes himself, in language which there is no reason to doubt, as a Phoenician of Emesa, one of the kin of the Sun, that is the royal and priestly family consecrated to the sun-god Elagabal, which supplied several rulers to the empire. The romance is full of religious feeling, the worship of Apollo, whom the writer definitely identifies with the sun,[1] and often calls God absolutely, being much insisted on. Demons are already in process of sinking from the position of demi-gods to that of torturing spirits and powers of evil. The theology, with its recommendations of abstinence and external purity, is akin to the Neopythagorean, represented by Philostratus, and there are indeed many points of contact with the latter's life of Apollonius. The date is probably the period when the sun cult of Emesa and other Syrian centres had the widest influence, soon after the middle of the third century. Emesa remained faithful to the empire in the rebellion of Zenobia, and Aurelian made

[1] x. 36.

offerings in the sun temple there; and this date is borne out by the existence, known from historians, of a powerful Ethiopian state at this time. Much of the usual sophistic ornament is utilized—digressions on natural phenomena, letters, speeches, prophecies, etc.—but the character-drawing is weak. The language is on the whole pure, resembling the revived Atticism of Lucian or Philostratus. The morality inculcated is higher than that of any other of the heathen romances. Indeed the Christians gratified themselves by assuming that it was the early work of a fourth-century bishop, also called Heliodorus, which was naturally a common name in Syria.

The hero and heroine are a young Greek athlete Theagenes, and Chariclea, an Ethiopian princess, who had been reared by an aged priest of Delphi, and first saw Theagenes at some games celebrated in that place. After innumerable adventures with pirates, brigands, and Persian satraps, they pass through Egypt into Ethiopia; Chariclea is acknowledged by her father, and the pair, after being united in marriage, become the priest and priestess of the sun and moon. At the same time the custom of human sacrifice to the god, to which Theagenes had almost fallen a victim, was suppressed.

Chariclea Condemned to be Burned on a Charge of Poisoning.[1]

" Promising to mount the pyre quietly, and holding out her hands to the heavens in the quarter where the sun cast his rays, she cried: 'O sun, and earth, and deities who on the earth and below the earth look on and punish lawless men, be ye witnesses that I am pure of the charge brought against me. Receive me graciously, enduring death readily, as I do, owing to the unbearable outrages of fortune; but hasten to punish the godless, criminal, faithless Arsace, who does this to deprive me of my affianced husband.'

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[1] viii. 9.

Having thus spoken, when all raised cries at her words, some preparing to delay the punishment for a second trial, others urging it on, she forestalled all by mounting on the pyre. Settling herself in the midst, she stood long unharmed, the flames, floating round her rather than drawing near, injuring her not at all, but withdrawing from whatever part Chariclea approached, and illuminating her so that she seemed transparent."

The Christian or semi-Christian romances have a more Oriental flavour, and are more disconnected than the heathen. Magic is prominent here also, as well as demons of every kind, and the piece usually ends with the death of the hero or heroine, who falls a victim to some persecutor of the true faith. Of the *Acts of Judas Thomas* both a Greek and a Syriac version are extant, but the latter is fuller and probably the original. Though the scene is laid chiefly in India the myth has been shown to have grown up in the neighbourhood of Edessa, among the Syriac-speaking population of Mesopotamia. Two sidereal deities, probably, like the ruling house, of Arab origin, were worshipped in this district, Azizus and Monimus, corresponding to the morning and evening star; and in their honour the tall, twin towers of Edessa are believed to have been erected. Traces of such twin worship are common both among Greeks and Semites, as at Antioch, in Phoenicia, and even at Jerusalem.[1]

According to the Christian adaptation the apostle Thomas, or *twin*, was really called Judas, and was the mortal twin-brother of Christ, as one of the pairs of Greek twins was mortal, and as the evening star sets and dies, while the morning star remains till sunrise. From at least the middle of the fourth century the bones of Thomas were believed to be at Edessa, and the legend probably grew up round his shrine, incorporating some earlier materials.

[1] II. Macc. ii. 3 ; *cf.* 1 Reg. vii. 12; and, for further references, J. R. Harris, *Dioscuri in the Christian Legends* (1903) and *Cult of the Heavenly Twins* (1906).

The Acts as we have them depict manners Mesopotamian rather than Indian, with names mostly of Syriac origin, and display Gnostic tendencies towards celibacy and asceticism. The episodes are very slightly attached to one another.

After the Crucifixion the evangelization of India was allotted to Thomas, and on his expressing himself as unfit for the task he was sold as a slave to an Indian merchant, who had been sent by the king Gudnaphar to obtain a skilful architect. In the first Act, Thomas, with the merchant, attended the wedding of a king's daughter at Sandaruk, and the former recited a hymn in praise of the church, from which an extract has been quoted above. This caused a Jewish flute-girl to recognize him as an apostle. A cup-bearer who had struck Thomas was torn by a lion at the fountain, and the apostle was asked by the king to pray for his daughter. Later Christ appeared to the affianced pair, but was mistaken by them for Thomas, and persuaded them to adopt a life of asceticism. After his arrival in India Thomas was ordered by the king to build him a palace, and, contrary to custom, chose the winter for his task. He, however, spent the money which was provided on charitable works, teaching among the villagers and living frugally. The king came to examine the palace, and was told that it existed only in heaven, whereupon Thomas and the merchant who brought him were imprisoned. But the king's brother Gad happened to die, and on reaching heaven saw the palace, and asked the angel who guided him to be allowed to dwell in it. This was refused, but he was permitted to return to earth and try to win his brother to the faith. Both were subsequently baptized by Thomas, with oil poured over their heads in a bath brilliantly illuminated.

In the third Act Thomas was addressed as the twin of Christ and its own persistent enemy by a black snake,

which had just killed a young man. It was a Manichaean evil power, the ruler of this world, who hardened Pharaoh's heart, and caused the Israelites to set up the Calf, and Caiaphas to condemn Christ. It was forced by the apostle to suck the poison from the wound, whereupon the youth recovered, the serpent burst asunder. In the fourth Act an ass colt, of the stock of Balaam's ass, addressed Thomas as the twin of the Messiah, and carried him back to the city, thereupon falling dead. The fifth and seventh Acts deal with the routing of demons, who periodically harassed certain women, the sixth contains a grisly account of Hades, with pits of blazing fire, revolving wheels of flame, and caves for torture. Other adventures succeed, in the course of which, as in the legend of St. Neot, wild animals placed themselves at the disposal of the apostle when in need, wild asses replacing the exhausted cattle who drew his car. Eventually he was imprisoned by another Indian king, and recited the Hymn of the Soul, a kind of short epic on a young prince who went to Egypt in search of a pearl guarded by a great serpent. He forgot his quest and became the servant of the king of Egypt, till a letter from his parents warning him to act came in the likeness of an eagle which alighted near and addressed him. It is clearly an allegory on the soul despatched from above, and forgetting on earth its origin and true aims until roused by revelation. It thus has no essential connection with the Acts, and may belong to the earlier Gnostic school of Syria, perhaps to the famous Bardesanes himself.

Thomas was finally stabbed by soldiers in the mountains after ordaining an Indian general as a priest and the king's son as a deacon, and dust from his grave was able to work miracles.

The Legend of Cyprian and Justina exists in both Greek and Latin versions, but from the mentions of Antioch and

the Oriental character of the demons or djinns who figure in it, it seems to have originated in Syria. It is, however, partly based on the Acts of Paul and Thecla, partly on the tradition that Cyprian of Carthage was once a famed magician.

Justina, a maiden of Antioch, lived with her father Edusius, a heathen priest, near the grove of Daphne. She was betrothed to Aglaides, but overhearing the preaching of a Christian deacon from a neighbouring house, was converted. The bishop of the city induced Edusius to renounce his profession, and he and his wife, having been warned by an angel, were baptized. Aglaides, being rejected by Justina, had recourse to a magician, Cyprian, who promised to send a demon and force her to love him. However, Cyprian himself fell in love with her and conjured up a devil, which Justina repelled by blowing in its face and making the sign of the cross. A second demon failed similarly, and eventually the arch-fiend himself. Cyprian expressed resentment at this disappointment, and was himself assailed by Satan, whom he succeeded in driving off by freeing one hand and making the potent sign. The wizard was afterwards baptized, and eventually rose to be bishop of Antioch. In the persecution of Diocletian Cyprian and Justina were brought to Nicomedia, and placed over a fire in a cauldron of pitch and tallow. They sang a hymn, and the flames, shooting out, caused the death of a magician who stood by, but left them unharmed. They were then taken away to the river-side and decapitated.

The chief interest of such Christian romances is their confirmation of the view that the spread of Christianity in the East coincided with a definite native revival in ideas and imagery. Greek sobriety of thought has vanished, together with Greek beauty of form. The speeches, however, as in many Oriental works, often show poetical

beauty, and must not be judged by the absurdity of the incidents.

The Mesopotamian city of EDESSA is of peculiar interest in church history as the first important Christian centre away from the Greek-speaking districts, indeed outside the empire altogether until the beginning of the third century. The language was the eastern branch of the Aramaic, spoken over the Euphrates valley, and this branch was the first to be used for literary purposes. The Church, which was established before the end of the second century, was out of harmony with the Greek traditions of Antioch and the West. It used its own biblical versions, first the translation into Syriac of Tatian's *Diatesseron*, later the *Peshitta* or "simple version," probably by Rabbula, bishop of Edessa from A.D. 411 to 435. The opposition to Western thought eventually developed into Nestorianism, which prevailed widely in the interior of Syria, and extended to India and China. A further schism rent the more orthodox party through the very wide acceptance of Monophysite views, a heresy which, fiercely persecuted by the Byzantine empire, led to the welcoming of the more tolerant Arabs, and still numbers many adherents in the far-eastern Churches.

The ecclesiastical writers connected with Edessa, especially in the fourth and fifth centuries, are numerous. Among the most noteworthy were the famous hymn-writer and preacher, St. Ephraim, his disciple, Isaac the Great, and the various members of the "Persian school," whose translations familiarized the Syriac church with Greek logical and theological works. The tenets of the school, which derived its name from the readiness with which its views were received in Persia, were Nestorian, and Nestorianism was always closely connected with Aristotelian logic. Aristotelianism thus became a favourite study among the heretical churches of Syria towards the end of the empire,

and was by them transmitted to the Arabs, who eventually brought back the study of logic to Europe in the Middle Ages.

Syriac literature has often been accused of a certain mediocrity, but BARDESANES seems to have been a writer of some genius. He was born at Edessa about A.D. 154, was educated at Hierapolis, returned to Edessa in 179, and was converted to Christianity. Later he acted as a missionary among the mountains of Armenia. There is considerable confusion in the tradition as to his views. He seems to have inclined to certain astrological heresies and Chaldaean occultism, and is usually reckoned as one of the early Gnostics. His Syriac works were numerous, and included a history of Armenia, utilized by later writers, some notes on Indian customs derived from Indian embassies passing through Edessa, polemical works, and hymns. The only one that survives seems to be a compilation by one of his disciples; it is called *The Book of the Laws of Countries*, in the form of a dialogue between a Christian and a heathen. Besides discussing the origin of sin and the power of fate, it contains some interesting facts about the laws and customs of these remote parts. The whole Syriac text survives, and some Greek fragments quoted by the Fathers.

Reference is made to the suppression by the converted King Abgar of savage customs previously practised at Edessa in honour of the Syrian goddess; to the discouragement by the Romans of circumcision and other ancient practices among the Mesopotamian Arabs; to the custom at Edessa in pagan times of putting unfaithful wives to death, and in neighbouring districts of stoning thieves. The work shows much independence.

Bardesanes is recorded to have had great eloquence, with a mind full of mysticism; and he war a lover of elegance in daily life, and of music, which he first introduced into the far-eastern Churches.

On the Chaldaean Astrology.

"In Media all men at the moment of death, even when there is still left in them a remnant of life, are thrown to the dogs, which eat the corpses throughout Media. However, we cannot say that all Medes are born at the moment when the moon, in relation to them, is joined with Mars in the sign of Cancer on the day when it passes beneath the earth. But the statement is that those who are to be eaten by dogs are born at such a time. All Indians are consumed by fire when they die, and many of their women are burned alive with them. Yet we cannot say that all Indian women who have been burned were born while Mars and the sun met in the sign of Leo, in the night when it passed beneath the earth; that being when men who are consumed by fire are thought to be born."

The extraordinary contrasts presented by various parts of Syria in the later empire may be appreciated when we turn from the Oriental and mystical school of Edessa to the revived Atticism, the elegant little letters and poems of those late descendants of the Philistines, the scholars of Gaza.

A fourth-century writer[1] refers to the existence of a rhetorical school at Gaza, and its close connection with Egypt, especially Alexandria, caused it to retain classical culture to a later date than other parts of Syria. It is also possible that the unwillingness with which old heathen rites were finally abandoned may have induced the Gazans to cling longer to other elements in their ancient civilization.

Heathen festivals and pantomimes were now replaced by public recitations in prose or verse, the latter often improvised. Chief among these was the Day of Roses, representing the old Maiuma festival. The loves and sorrows of Aphrodite were then celebrated, the fate of Adonis, the beauties and symbolism of the rose, frequently in the simple Anacreontic metre, which had a special charm in this second childhood of Greek literature. Similarly

[1] *Expositio*, 32: Gaza habet bonos auditores.

bishop Marcianus replaced an old Dionysiac festival by a harvest celebration with splendid illuminations.

The most brilliant period of the school was about A.D. 500, when it stood mainly under the direction of Procopius, a Christian rhetorician trained at Alexandria.

In the sphere of Oratory we have eulogies of emperors or other dignitaries or of deceased persons, *ecphraseis*, or elaborate descriptions of churches or other buildings or of works of art, and *monodiae*, or mourning orations on local or national calamities. Some orations are of a more definitely scholastic character, variations on a well-known mythological or historical theme, or expositions of some classical *chef d'œuvre*. Letters are numerous, often of a semi-philosophical character, evidently intended for publication, and with little real information about the circumstances of the correspondents. Philosophy itself had by now become very trivial. Its professors styled themselves Christian sophists, and wrote biblical commentaries or treatises against the *Hellenes* or Gentiles, or supplied their pupils with commonplace maxims wherewith to embellish their orations. A few Gazans held Neoplatonist views, as Isidore, who for a time migrated to Persia when Justinian closed the philosophical schools at Athens, but they do not seem to have been active in their native town.

Grammatical and rhetorical handbooks were produced in large numbers, and the schools of Gaza were widely attended from all parts of the eastern provinces and even from Athens; and exchanges of teachers and scholars with Caesarea and other learned centres sometimes took place. The Gazans indeed, in spite of their artificiality and slavish adherence to their favourite models, were much superior to any contemporaries, and served as models for later Byzantine orators. The whole of this southern coast

retained more freedom of thought and was less wrapped up in ecclesiastical controversy than Antioch and the northern towns.[1]

PROCOPIUS himself combined many activities, as those of a Christian apologist, a writer of rhetorical handbooks, illustrating, for instance, the right use of Homeric quotations, a teacher, and polite letter-writer. Only two of his orations survive, a eulogy of Anastasius, who had remitted some unpopular taxes and won victories in Mesopotamia, and one of doubtful authenticity on the destruction of St. Sophia by an earthquake. A lost *Monodia* referred to the ruin caused at Antioch by the earthquake of A.D. 526. There is also a large collection of letters, showing that he maintained relations with pupils in many parts of the empire.

AENEAS, a contemporary of Procopius, was a sophist connected with the Alexandrine school of Hierocles, and a teacher of rhetoric. He was one of the few to use the Platonic dialogue for biblical or theological subjects, and left a dialogue, *Theophrastus*, in opposition to the Neoplatonist doctrine of the eternity of the world. There is also a collection of letters of some value.

CHORICIUS was a rhetor and disciple of Procopius, who also studied at Alexandria. His tendency was less towards religion and philosophy than his predecessors, and more in the direction of the old mythology and poetry. His public speeches belong to several of the kinds mentioned above. One is to Marcianus, with a description of the church of St. Sergius at Gaza; one describes a public clock in that city, an elaborate machine with rows of marble columns supporting brazen eagles, and a figure of Heracles

[1] Thus, as late as A.D. 570 Antoninus Martyr (p. 35, ed. Tobler) describes the Gazans as "homines honestissimi, omni liberalitate decori, amatores peregrinorum."

coming out of a door to announce the hours. There are also *ethopoiae*, sentimental descriptions of scenes and landscapes, with similes or moral maxims. His address to Procopius in A.D. 528 is one of the chief sources of information about the latter's life and influence, and he evidently borrows much from the master, as is seen from the many imitations of the one certain speech of Procopius which exists.

Choricius on Spring.

"Since winter and the snows are gone and nothing any more afflicts the sight, but a glimmer of spring has appeared, come, let us also put an end to silence, that winter of language. Shameful would it be if swallows faring hither and thither through the air should sing as though wishing to celebrate the spring, while with us the Muses should be less honoured than by birds. Even the swans are by the season reminded of song, and fly to Xanthus river or the banks of Cayster, or about the plains near Pactolus, that river of Lydia, giving over their pinions to the Zephyr, and hymn Apollo, recalling the tuneful lyre with their wings."

The Rose.

"One would say that the Graces were its assessors, for it is protected on all sides, as though with a bodyguard of thorns surrounding it; nor does it admit one who seeks wantonly or carelessly to bring near his hands; but it shows itself in queenly fashion, rising from the centre of its cup. Nay, one would suppose that it cast the spell of love upon its admirers. A ruddy hue joins with the white, and each is softened by the blending of their sheen."

Timotheus, who also lived under Anastasius, addressed a poetical appeal or *tragoedia* to that emperor to remove the oppressive tax Chrysargyron, and wrote an "epic" in four books on the subject of the beasts and birds of India and Africa, of which fragments remain in a prose paraphrase. The author occasionally saw strange animals from those parts passing through Gaza for exhibition in the capital; and it forms one of the few works of the period on any branch of natural science. It cannot, however,

be said that its scientific value is great, as may be inferred from the following extracts:[1]

"The hyaena in alternate years becomes male and female; it has bristly thick hair; does not bend its neck, since it has only one bone instead of vertebrae. It pairs with the wolf, and produces the *monolycus*, which does not go in herds, but lives alone, robbing men and beasts. It steals bodies from the grave, and sees by night as by day."

"The hunters, seizing the cubs of the tigress while she is away, put them in glass vessels; and when they are overtaken throw down one vessel. While she is busy about it, deceived by the form of the cub in the glass, the horsemen escape with the others."

"The mole is a blind weasel which, creeping under the earth, eats the roots of plants and dries them up. It is hunted by craft and snares. It is said to be Phineus, who changed into a beast from anger towards the sun, and if it be seen by the sun the earth no more receives it."

Of JOHANNES (*c.* A.D. 530) there remains a hexameter *ecphrasis* of a work of art at Gaza, and a collection of Anacreontics, showing the influence of the poetical revival in Egypt connected with the name of Nonnus. An extract from a recitation delivered on the Day of Roses is added, and two stanzas of a dialogue between Zeus and Aphrodite—

What brings not forth the spring-time
When winter's path is over?
How rich the Grace's bounty
When she crowns the vernal beauty.
The spring gives every favour,
And dissipates life's sorrows;
Then, too, the Rose is blooming
With ruddy-edgèd clusters.
The delicate Cythera,
Her cheek like unto roses,
Desireth, fragrant-scented,
To be called the rosy-fingered.
He, too, in bloom of boyhood,
Than stilly calm far sweeter,
Hath left the depths of Hades,
Of charms the lord, Adonis.

Aphr. I will go down to Hades,
Yet Cerberus' wild barking,
The tyrant's gloomy hell-hound,
Shall not dismay my courage,
And I'll bring back my loved one.
Zeus. Go down, O Cypris, swiftly,
With Cupid and his arrows,
To the halls of the departed,
That while such labours hold you
His quiver may not harm me.

[1] *Hermes*, iii. 1.

CHAPTER XI

RELIGION

"The Baalim and the Ashtaroth and the gods of Syria and the gods of Zidon."—BOOK OF JUDGES.

RELIGION entered more into the life and thoughts of the Semite than of either the Greek or Roman. He cared little about religious systems, lacked mythology, and could tolerate absurd inconsistencies; but he was thoroughly impressed with the all-powerful character of his god. All functions and blessings—rain, fertility, victory, forgiveness, future life—were in his gift. He might have a female consort, who in some states occupied the superior position, and one or two more shadowy figures might exist by their side; but all were essentially aspects of one deity, and there was no attempt to differentiate functions, as among European peoples.

The priesthood, though not vowed to celibacy, formed a separate caste, and was thought to participate in the divine character. Ritual was of all-absorbing importance, sacrifice was lavish in amount and strictly defined in kind; processions were of extraordinary splendour, accompanied by music and dancing, often by frantic displays of ecstasy, which led to wild cries and self-mutilation. Yet by a swift reaction such exaltation was frequently succeeded by gross debauchery, a transition hard for Western minds to realize, but perhaps due to a survival of the magical practices from which these cults had developed. This

stain attached to most of the great Syrian shrines, as Heliopolis, Byblus, and Hierapolis; especially when, like Aphaca, they lay in remote parts, away from the supervision of Roman magistrates.

Several taboos lasted on among the native peoples. Syrians, like modern Arabs, shrank from fish, a feeling, it need hardly be said, not shared by the luxurious inhabitants of Antioch. The Greeks were reduced to ludicrous expedients in order to explain this self-denial. Thus, Gatis, a Syrian queen, had been so fond of fish that she forbade all to eat it except Gatis, ἄτερ Γατίδος, an explanation which had the merit of providing a derivation for the divine name Atargatis. According to another account, this goddess was once a harsh queen who obliged her subjects to bring the fish which they caught to her; and when she was deified the custom arose of offering gold and silver fish to her, or in the case of priests real ones.[1]

Sacred fishponds existed at Edessa, Ascalon, and Hierapolis. At the last-named an altar stood in the centre of the pool, resting on a pillar garlanded and holding fragrant spices. On one occasion, the legend ran, the Syrian goddess Atargatis herself descended here, and took up one of the fish to heaven, where it became the ancestor of the zodiacal sign Pisces.[2] Pilgrims crowned with wreaths daily swam across to the altar, and the fish, of which the chief was distinguished by a gold ornament on the fin, had separate names, and would come when called.[3] At Ascalon the fishpond figures on the local coinage, and, according to Diodorus,[4] the respect for fish here was due to the goddess of the place having cast herself, from shame at being inspired with love for a mortal youth, into the lake, after which she assumed the form of a fish from the waist down-

[1] Athen. viii. 346.
[2] [Eratosth] *Catasterism*. 28.
[3] Luc. *De dea S*. 45–46.
[4] ii. 4.

wards. This may represent some echo of the Cretan legend of Britomartis,[1] perhaps brought over by the Philistines of Ascalon, added to the fact that fish, with other creatures, such as oxen, horses, eagles, and lions,[2] were sacred to the Semitic goddess of fertility. In Phoenicia the taboo was on cow's flesh, in honour of Astarte,[3] that of bulls apparently being allowed. Syrians in general avoided the swine, which was sacred to infernal powers, and as such became the instrument for destroying the god of life and vegetation, Adonis. The dove was especially sacred to the Syrian goddess,[4] and might not even be touched, anyone who accidentally touched a dove being unclean for the rest of the day. Hence they were numerous round the temple of Hierapolis, entered into the houses and fed on the ground. Among the Phoenicians of Cyprus doves were sacred to Adonis, and were burned on a pyre in his honour.[5] According to one legend, Semiramis, the child of the goddess of Ascalon, when exposed as an infant, was reared by doves, which warmed her with their wings and brought her food in their beaks until she was adopted by the king's herdsman; wherefore, the historian proceeds, all Syrians have ever revered them as divine.[6]

Whether human sacrifices lasted on under the Romans is a difficult question. Originally the use of nearly all Semitic peoples, they came to be, as civilization advanced, an expedient reserved for extreme peril. Kings, who, as divine incarnations, had been frequently the victims, were replaced by figures of straw, virgins by cows or other animals. Yet tradition sometimes demanded such offerings, and Jephthah's daughter had many successors before

[1] Ant. Lib. 40. [2] Luc. *De dea S.* 41.

[3] Porph. *Abst.* ii. 11; *cf.* Delos inscription in *Acad. des Inscr.* 1909.

[4] Luc. *op. cit.* 54. [5] Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 64.

[6] Diod. ii. 4.

Hadrian tried to stamp out the practice. At Laodicea a virgin was annually sacrificed to "Athena" until a deer took her place;[1] Elagabalus was accused of offering children in his sun-temple at Rome;[2] at Hierapolis parents hurled down their children from the propylaea as offerings to Atargatis;[3] an Arabian tribe annually sacrificed a child, which they buried beneath the altar that served them as an idol.[4] In many parts, too, bodies of slain victims were used for purposes of divination. Such acts were, however, illegal throughout, and in Roman times apparently exceptional; though increasing devotion to magic in the later ages of paganism may have led to some revival, which is, however, doubtless exaggerated by the Christian controversialists who are our chief authorities.

To the dweller in semi-tropical regions, where a large part of the year is absolutely rainless, the river is liable to appear the prime source of fertility even more than the shower; and many traces remain of a worship given to a deity established on the edge of a river or lake, from which, too, oracles could be drawn. One of the most famous of such sites was Aphaca (now Afka), by the source of the River Adonis (Nahr Ibrahim). At the head of a wooded gorge in Lebanon the river springs from a cavern, overlooked by a semicircle of tall cliffs, and disappears in a foaming course down between tree-covered banks. On a terrace facing the source, separated by a large wall, are remains of a temple built of vast blocks of local stone and Egyptian granite, with a cubical base and pyramid adjoining. The style suggests the Augustan age.

The place was looked on as that where Astarte for the first (according to some accounts for the last) time saw her lover, and where his body was buried. On the neigh-

[1] Porph. *Abst.* ii. 56.
[2] Zon. xii. 14.
[3] Luc. *De dea S.* 58.
[4] Eus. *Praep.* iv. 16.

bouring cliffs are carvings relating to his sad history. One of these is mentioned by a writer of the empire: " an effigy of the goddess is fashioned on Mount Libanus, with veiled head, sad mien, supporting her face on her left hand within her robe." In the rock-carving at Ghineh, to which Macrobius[1] probably refers, Adonis is also seen standing with spear in hand awaiting the onslaught of some monster like a bear, while another panel close by shows a standing figure, probably Adonis again, holding a lance, and accompanied by two dogs. Beneath the former is a recess which may have been the legendary tomb in which the image of Adonis was laid in his annually recurring funeral. The river, every spring, washed down red earth and coloured the sea at Byblus with the blood of Adonis, and the festival then began. Several rivers, as one at Gerasa, underwent a similar change on the anniversary of the miracle at Cana.[2]

The rites in the remote grove of Aphaca, where the temple had no responsible head, were very discreditable, and Constantine had the shrine demolished by soldiers, and the population of the place moved to Heliopolis. Perhaps, however, some revival took place under Julian, as the fifth-century Zosimus speaks of a ceremonial as still continuing.[3] On one day of the year the goddess, who was frequently identified with the planet Venus, could be seen descending from Lebanon in the form of a brilliant meteor, which disappeared in the water. One account of this incident describes the luminous body as falling into a lake near the sanctuary, into which pilgrims dropped offerings of gold and silver, and linen or muslin stuffs. When the goddess welcomed the gifts all alike sank, otherwise heavy and light both floated. Before the fall of Palmyra the citizens joined in the festival, but the presents thrown in

[1] i. 21; *cf.* Renan, *Mission*, pl. 38. [2] Epiphan. *Haer.* 51, 30.
[3] Eus. *Vit. Const.* iii. 55; Soc. i. 18; Soz. ii. 5; Zos. i. 58.

by them the previous year all rose to the surface. There is, however, no trace of a lake near the Afka stream, and the real site of the oracle may have been the Lake Yammuneh, eleven miles inland. It is fed by two streams, but has no apparent outlet, and is believed to connect underground with the Adonis River. There are signs of a shrine adjoining, and it has been noticed that pebbles thrown into one of these rivers meet with so violent a current that they return to the surface and are swept over the fall.

Another water-oracle at a fountain near Palmyra was consecrated to the solar god Jaribolus, and its answers are often commemorated in the inscriptions of the place. Thus it recommended that the gratitude of the town towards its benefactors should be recorded, and gave advice as to the choice of magistrates.

Near Caesarea Philippi a sacrificial offering was cast into a stream on days of festival, and immediately disappeared. On one occasion, owing to the prayers of a Christian convert, Asterius, who pitied the people's blindness, the victim suddenly rose again to the surface.[1] At Hierapolis solemn processions took place to the lake already mentioned, the statue of the goddess carried at the head; clearly the relic of an old incantation to produce rain.[2] At the same place pilgrims, once a year, poured out in the temple water which they had brought from remote parts, so that it ran into a cleft in the floor.

Traces of tree-worship are fewer, but still important. Adonis miraculously sprang from a myrrh-tree, from which, one story ran, he was released by a boar which rent the bark, and myrrh was used at his festival. Similarly an altar now at Rome[3] shows the birth of the Palmyrene god, Malakhbel, from a tree, which is surmounted by a

[1] Eus. *H. E.* vii. 17.

[2] Luc. *De dea S.* 47.

[3] *Rev. Arch.* 1903, p. 377.

fillet as a sign of divinity. Sacred trees, which it was forbidden to cut, stood in the valley near the Arabian sanctuary of Taif, and an oak (according to others, a terebinth), associated with the story of Abraham at Hebron, was the object of superstitious worship, paid both to the tree and to the angels who had been entertained there. A kind of fair was held at the spot, an altar set up, and sacrifice offered, until Constantine had the shrine destroyed and a church substituted.[1] The explanation may be that this was an ancient sacred spot which received a quasi-Christian association in order to justify the cult, just as a sacred tree which had long been worshipped at Samosata was described as sprung from a piece of the true cross.

Meteorites, especially those of a conical form, were objects of worship in many parts of Syria and Arabia among the less Hellenized peoples, and they were indeed more frequently used as representations of the divine presence than anthropomorphic images. The black stone of Emesa, with its strange knobs, is a well-known example. It often appears on the local coinage, an eagle with outstretched wings in front, and as the emblem of the sun-god Elagabal it was transferred to Rome to be placed in the new temple of that deity by his imperial high-priest.[2] Some coins of Seleucia represent Zeus Casius as a shapeless stone, and among the Arabs Dusares was worshipped in the form of a large, square stone on which the blood of sacrifices was let to flow.[3] Such stones among the Arabs often rested on square columns placed at the centre of a consecrated enclosure, and usually inscribed. One such pillar is built into a Christian church at Khidr, in the Djebel ed-Druz in eastern Syria.[4] Sheep are still said to be sacrificed here both by Druses and Moslems. So among the Phoeni-

[1] Eus. *Vit. Const.* iii. 51; Jer. *De loc. Hebr.* [2] Herodian, v. 3.
[3] Max. Tyr. viii. 8; Suid, Θευσαρής. [4] Dussaud, *Voyage Arch.* 161.

cians of Paphos a cone-shaped stone represented Astarte, and was anointed at festivals with olive oil.[1] The name of such stones was *baetuli*, probably a Graecized form of Bethel, as they were looked on as the dwelling-place of the divine presence. Thus Jacob, in his flight before Esau, poured oil upon the stone on which he had seen his wonderful vision, and "called the name of that place Beth-el."[2] The sacredness of stones seems also reflected in the old Arab custom, called by Roman jurists *scopelismus*, when they were placed in the field of a private foe as an intimation that the land must be left uncultivated on pain of death.[3]

No very satisfactory explanation has been given of the origin of pillar-saints, ascetics who lived for weeks or years together on tall columns of stone. Many were Christian mystics, but such columns were also associated with heathen temples; and the practice may have arisen from a confused feeling that the worshipper, on a height, was nearer to his god, just as early Semitic sanctuaries consisted of an altar within a grove upon a hill-top. A pair of colossal columns stood in the open vestibule of the Atargatis temple at Hierapolis. The height given by Lucian,[4] 300 fathoms, must be a comic exaggeration, but his account is plausible enough in the main. A man climbed to the top of one every year with the help of a rope, and remained seven days, begging for blessings on the whole of Syria. By means of another rope he hauled up fuel, clothes, and other necessaries, making himself a kind of hut. Suppliants arrived with valuable presents, gold, silver, or bronze, which they left behind after giving their name. Another person passed on the name to the Stylite, who then offered a prayer on their behalf, at the same time rattling a bronze instrument. He was believed never to sleep, as the faithful said,

[1] *J. H. Stud.* ix. 188.
[2] Gen. xxviii. 18–19.
[3] Ulp. *Dig.* 47, 11. 9.
[4] *De dea S.* 28.

because a scorpion stung him if he yielded to fatigue, but Lucian suggests that the fear of falling off acted more powerfully. It may only be a coincidence that Elagabalus, after his annual festival in the suburbs of Rome, had a tall tower erected, probably of wood. From this he scattered bowls of gold and silver, garments and pieces of stuff, together with wild or tame animals, "as Phoenician custom required," the unclean swine being of course excluded.[1]

It is unnecessary to multiply instances of the widespread asceticism prevailing among this supposedly luxurious race. We may take as an example the virgin of Niha, not far from Heliopolis, who abstained from bread for twenty years in honour of the god Hadaranes, as we learn from an inscribed tablet on which both the god and his worshipper are represented.[2] These popular rites and superstitions might of themselves convey the impression that the Syrians were still at a low stage of intellectual development. It is however peculiarly true of the "unchanging East" that religious usage is apt to lag behind the actual opinions of the better educated classes. The presence of a large priestly caste in a state of semi-seclusion, holding separate councils and differing in food, clothes, and daily habits, led to the elaboration of a body of mystical and theological doctrine very remote from the absurdities of sacred fishponds or pillar devotees.

The divine triads and sidereal worships of Babylonia, Chaldaean astrology, Isiac and Persian doctrines of future life, Greek philosophy and rationalism, all influenced the later Syrian religious schools. The various local cults, while retaining their individuality for the ordinary observer, were fused into a great monotheistic system, international and at the same time attractive to the individual, capable

[1] Hdn. v. 6. [2] C. I. L. iii. 13608.

of satisfying both intellectual and emotional needs, and raising the poorest and humblest to a level with the ruling classes.

In Greece itself the old Mysteries sufficiently met these wants, and Syrian or other Oriental beliefs did not extend widely; but in Italy and the West, where, during the first two centuries of the empire the state religion was losing its hold, the splendour of the Oriental ceremonial, the activity of Oriental missionaries, and the value which they attached to the individual worshipper, won many adherents outside the ranks of Asiatic soldiers or other settlers.

While the importance of the future life was less insisted on than by the Egyptians, and the ideal of conduct was less high than among the Mithraist brotherhood, the Syrians were pre-eminent in their exalted conception of divine beings. In the primitive Semitic community the local god was absolute owner of the tribal territory, the giver of rain, streams, harvests, and every other blessing, and he was to be propitiated by every kind of offering. As Persian and Babylonian influences were brought to bear, this Baal was exalted among the stars, and though not formally identified with the sun except by the vulgar, at any rate till late in the empire, he received the sun as a constant emblem; while his consort, Baalith, was associated with the brightest of the planets, the sun's faithful companion.

No compulsion could be exercised on this god, as on the Egyptian deities; he was "all-powerful," "everlasting," "most high," "the preserver of the whole universe,"[1] and separated from man by a far greater interval than any god of Greece or Rome. Future life for the pious would be in the world of stars; the underworld was a place of

[1] C. I. L. vi. 406; Macrob. i. 14; Apul. Met. viii. 25: "Omnipotens et omniparens dea Syria." In the West *aeternus* is especially an epithet of Syrian deities.

punishment for the wicked. The great shrines of Syria were open to all, and no longer confined to any tribe or community.

The natural tendency of such doctrines was towards a vague pantheism, and they clearly had an influence on the development of the Neoplatonist tenets. Yet such vagueness must in the end be fatal to a religion which seeks to retain a real hold over society as a whole; nor did the developed pantheism of Syrian mystics subsist for more than about two centuries. To some extent it influenced, to a greater it was absorbed by the growing Christian Church.

Some particulars are preserved about a great number of cults, and I propose only to select a few representative deities belonging to the five races which seem, apart from Greek settlers, to have contributed to the Syrian pantheon: Jupiter Dolichenus, an import from Asia Minor; Hadad, the god of Heliopolis, and his consort, Atargatis, the divine pair of Aramaean or north Syrian tribes; Astarte and Adonis for the Phoenicians; Marnas and Derceto, in whom we may trace survivals of the marine worships of the Philistines; and, finally, the Arab Dusares and Allath.

The cult of DOLICHENUS, though in Syria apparently limited to the remote districts of Commagene and Cyrrhestice, was one of the most widely extended in the West. This extension may be due to the frequent employment of Commagenian auxiliary cohorts by the Romans in Europe after the incorporation of these parts in the empire under Vespasian. The centre of the cult was the town of Doliche, now Aintab, near which, on a mountain, was the shrine of a god who was looked on as the lord of thunder and inventor of iron. He was represented as standing on a bull and holding a double axe, which may symbolize the thunderbolt by which trees are split. It is now

commonly thought that a Hittite prototype of this kind, the chief of a divine triad, similar to the axe-bearing Sandan who appears on the coins as the founder of Tarsus, was brought into Syria by Hittite settlers, perhaps about 1000 B.C., and combined at Doliche with the cult of some Semitic Baal. Monumental effigies of the god are numerous, but almost all far away from Syria; and he is frequently associated in inscriptions with the Aramaean Jupiter of Heliopolis. In Roman times he is usually shown clad in mail, or wearing a breastplate with an Eastern bonnet. In his uplifted right hand is an axe, in the left a thunderbolt; sometimes he also has a sword, sword-belt, and fringed cloak, and he stands on a bull.

The equipment proves that he was primarily a god of war and storm. The fierce Asiatic Bellona, who appears in the West about the same time,[1] may represent the goddess Kadesh, who had somewhat similar attributes, and was carried by a lion.

An eagle often accompanies figures of Dolichenus, as in Hittite monuments, and pyramids were erected to him, recalling the sacred pillars of Syrian Baalim.

The only dedication found near the original seat is at Antioch by Taurus (now Marasch), where the costume of the figure has more of a Persian character, with a *candys* or sleeved upper garment, and probably belongs to the first century B.C., as the style resembles royal monuments in Commagene of that period. Dolichenus, who appears sometimes as a bearded warrior, sometimes as a youth, became familiar in the West almost entirely through the agency of soldiers; and dedications are numerous in the second and third centuries, but cease before A.D. 300. They are few in Italy, and seem due to isolated horsemen or sailors, and occur chiefly in the garrison provinces, as

[1] *Cf.* Juv. iv. 124.

Britain, Dacia, Pannonia, or Africa. At times the god is combined with Mithras, pre-eminently a soldier's deity, or with Aesculapius, and even assumes the latter's staff and serpent, with certain healing-powers. A chalybeate spring existed near the temple at Doliche, and persons appear to have passed the night in his shrines in order to receive in sleep advice as to the treatment of disease. The first dedication in the West is at Lambaesis in Africa, of the time of Hadrian; and traces of twelve temples are known, in several cases in close proximity to Mithraic caves. They were covered within with paintings and bright metal plaques, and contained vases of lustral water and sacred pillars. With them was sometimes associated a college, with the usual staff—patron, scribe, *candidati*, etc., and *lecticarii*, or bearers of the litter on which the image of the god rested in processions. Such occasions, as at Heliopolis, may have been used for giving oracles. The college had a dining-hall adjoining the temple, and in some cases included members of the senatorial and equestrian orders, military legates, and women. Carnuntum in Pannonia, where the temple dated from about the middle of the third century, seems from the remains to have been one of the chief centres.

JUPITER HELIOPOLITANUS, like other Baalim, had once been a god of weather and fertility, who, as a result of foreign influences, by Roman times acquired solar attributes. Our chief authority for his cult and appearance is Macrobius,[1] a writer of about A.D. 400, who says: "The Assyrians also call the sun by the name of Jupiter Heliopolitanus, and celebrate him with very great ceremonies." His statue, he continues, had been brought from Egypt in very ancient times, and was long kept in Assyria; the rites were Syrian rather than Egyptian, yet proved that he was Jupiter and

[1] i. 17.

the Sun, as also did his costume. The statue was of gold, beardless, with a whip like a charioteer's in the uplifted right hand, in the left a thunderbolt and ears of corn. The shrine was noted for its oracle, the statue being carried on a litter by the leading inhabitants as the divine spirit prompted.

Extant monuments are in general accord with Macrobius' description, but add a *calathus*, or fruit-basket, adorned with leaves and fruit, on the head, and a curious cuirass, fitting tightly to the body and extending to the feet, covered with checks each enclosing a figure or symbolical ornament. These vary, but include some divine busts, as of the Sun and Moon, Cronos, or some local solar god, with a *calathus* like the principal figure; also lunar symbols and griffins, which were looked on as drawing the sun's car, and were probably Persian additions to Semitic mythology. The cuirass further bears the figure of a lion or lion's head, while on each side of the pedestal on which the god stands is a bull. The *calathus* sometimes has a boss in front, recalling the bright jewel on the forehead of the goddess of Hierapolis. The curly hair of the idol is held in by a plain band, and on the chest is a disk with ribbons, kept in position by a wide necklace. The Egyptian origin suggested by Macrobius is not borne out by the attributes, some of which, as the whip, ears of corn, and *calathus*, are Greek, some purely Oriental, as the bulls, thunderbolt, and disk. The legend that the idol came from Assyria may merely imply that the powerful North Semitic Hadad had been imposed on a local Baal.

With this god were associated Atargatis, Aphrodite, and Hermes. The latter is probably the Chamon to whom there are dedications at Ham,[1] near Heliopolis, and in Dacia. He acted as the escort of souls, and is in fact a

[1] *Cf.* Dussaud, *Voyage Arch.* 211.

mere doubling of the chief god, such as resulted from the desire to adapt the Syrian dyads to the trinities of Babylonia. At Hierapolis a daughter of Hadad, Simia,[1] is joined to the divine pair. She, or a male deity, Simius, who sometimes takes her place, appears in various personal names, as Sohaemus, king of Ituraea, or Soaemias, mother of Elagabalus. The ways in which the chief god or goddess could thus be doubled form some of the most complex problems in Syrian mythology.

The statues of Jupiter of Heliopolis vary in size, and the largest seem designed for carrying in such processions as Macrobius mentions. His constant association with bulls, as also the position of Dolichenus standing on the same animal, or that of Atargatis seated on a lion, points to an earlier identification of the god as a bull. Probably this identity was known to the inner circle of worshippers as a holy secret, mysteries often enshrining the older and savage aspects of a cult.

Something has been said in previous pages about ATARGATIS of Hierapolis, perhaps the chief religious centre of Syria, and one which preserved a large amount of archaic ritual. Like Hadad, she came from Mesopotamia, and she was originally a giver of fruitfulness, but had received certain sidereal qualities, being associated properly with the planet Venus, at a later date and somewhat hesitatingly, under the influences of the Egyptian Isis and the Greek

[1] *Cf.* Melito in *Spicil. Syr.*: "The daughter of Balat, who was skilled in medicine, cured Simia, daughter of Hadad, king of Syria." Later, Simia is described as having drawn water from the sea and cast it into a well within a wood at Hierapolis, in order to lay an evil spirit which lurked there, and was liable to assail passers-by. There seems to have been a chasm under the Hierapolis temple which emitted pestiferous vapours (Luc. *de dea S.* 13, and Photius, p. 345, Bekker); and the Simia legend perhaps represents a fusion of this belief with some such rain ceremony as Lucian describes.

Artemis, with the moon. This, in real Semitic mythology, was a male divinity, and merely a different aspect of the chief or solar god.

At Hierapolis her statue was radiated, with the rays turning upwards, a trait which allegorical interpreters explained of the crops springing up under her influence; while the rays of her consort pointed downwards.[1] She had a turreted crown, a sceptre in one hand, a spindle in the other, and wore the cestus of Aphrodite. The robes were richly jewelled with sardonyx, jacinths, and emeralds; and on the front of the crown was a ruby, which illuminated the whole temple at night.[2] The eyes of the image were made to follow the spectator, and it was upheld by lions.

Beside the goddess was a golden effigy of Hadad, also seated, but upheld by bulls, wearing a long, pointed beard, a *calathus* on his head, a breastplate, an uplifted spear in the right hand, a flower in the left, a gorgon's head embroidered on a robe hanging from his shoulders.[3] By his side were eagles, before his feet a female image girt with a snake, and having female effigies in each hand. Between the two principal figures was Simia, with the figure of a dove on her head. The inner shrine in which these three statues were placed was open to view from the temple itself, but was accessible only to the highest priests.

The temple was the resort of pilgrims from all Syria, Arabia, and Mesopotamia. It was surrounded by a double wall, had a great portico towards the north, and rested on a basement twelve feet high, mounted by stone steps. The outer court had golden doors, the interior of the temple also was brilliant with gold and fragrant with incense, which clung to the clothes long after leaving. Its walls were adorned with statues of Apollo and many heroes of Greek mythology. The Apollo was bearded, and was

[1] Macrob. i. 23. [2] Lucian, 32–33. [3] *Ibid.*, Macrob. i. 17.

clearly identical with the Hadad of the inner sanctuary, whom Macrobius identifies with the same god. The image was thought capable of giving oracles, moving of itself when it wished to give information, whereupon it was lifted by the priests and led them in one direction or another. In answer to questions it drew back to express a negative, urged on its bearers as a sign of approval, and was known to leap from one priest to another, or rise up into the air spontaneously.

The priests fell into various classes, with separate functions, under a chief priest elected every year, who wore a purple robe and golden diadem, in contrast to the white robe and felt cap of his subordinates. Associated with them were flute-players, pipers, eunuchs, and fanatical women. Bulls, cows, goats, or sheep were sacrificed twice a day, in silence to the god, with songs and the sound of flutes and cymbals to the goddess. Frantic processions took place outside the temple, closely resembling the excesses of Cybele worship, and accompanied by flutes and drums and the clashing of arms. Pilgrims who came to attend the festival had to shave their head and eyebrows, and many tattooed the wrist or neck, a custom still common in Syria.

An emblem of Atargatis is the disk combined with the crescent, showing that she united the powers of sun and moon, and it was she who under the neutral title of *Tyche*, or Fortune, presided over many Syrian towns. Fused with the Phoenician Astarte, she became the Dea Syria, sometimes vulgarized into Diasura, of Latin literature and inscriptions; and by the Greeks she was variously identified with Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena, according as the aspect of queen of heaven, of love, and of victory [1] predominated.

[1] *Cf.* 1 Sam. xxxi. 10: "And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth."

The cults of the PHOENICIANS show an earlier stage of development than those of North Syria, where Babylonian influence was stronger, but are more advanced than the Arabian. They are those of a pastoral and agricultural people, not yet established by the sea, nor were they amalgamated with the cults of solar and lunar powers, or of other cosmic forces, to the extent of the Aramaean. The main principles are, however, similar. We have a divine pair, Baal, a weather and fire god, and Astarte, with occasionally a somewhat shadowy third figure. Baal, "lord," was a mere epithet, usually combined with some second title, as Baal Sur, lord of Tyre; Baal Marqod, lord of the dance. In some states he was inferior to the goddess, who was primarily an earth-power and the giver of fertilizing springs, often looked on as a virgin, yet the mother of all living things. While in some cities her consort, Melcarth or Adonis, perished and revived, Astarte always lasted on; and this may point to some primitive matriarchal system of inheritance, such as left clearer traces in Egypt, where Isis enjoyed a similar superiority over Osiris.

Baal's emblem, like that of the Syrian Hadad, was a bull, Astarte's a dove, and in primitive times both deities probably assumed those forms. Astarte is sometimes horned, but the horns do not resemble those of a lunar deity, and she seems rather to have been associated with the planet Venus. As in the case of Atargatis, Greek and Isiac influences at last equated her with the moon, Baal with the sun. Sidon and Byblus were centres of Astarte worship; at the latter her emblem was a conical stone; and in the Tyrian colony of Carthage, where she retained a prominent position till the fifth century A.D., the goddess was represented by a shapeless stone image, which in the time of Elagabalus was conveyed to Rome to be united to the black meteorite from Emesa.

There are still doubts as to the identity of the Babylonian Tammuz (his full name, Dumu-zi-abzu, is explained as "true son of the deep water") and the Phoenician Adonis (a mere title, "lord"). It is, however, clear that their rites arose from similar instincts, and in the Roman age they were commonly regarded as the same. The Adonia of Antioch, which were still celebrated in the time of Julian,[1] were probably of Babylonian, those of Byblus and Bethlehem [2] of Phoenician, origin. In spite of the close association of Adonis with Syria, only these three towns, with some rural shrines up the river above Byblus, are specifically connected with his cult; but it spread widely in Greece, Egypt, and even in the Punic colonies of the West.

The inscriptions of Byblus or Gebal never mention Adonis by name, calling him "the highest" or "the satrap god";[3] and his consort, according to Lucian, who describes the rites in some detail,[4] was Aphrodite, who was also known as Baalith or Baaltis, a feminine form of Baal, but clearly only a double of the Astarte of Sidon and elsewhere. She had a large sanctuary at Byblus, where some of the Adonis rites were celebrated, and it is depicted on the local coins of Macrinus.[5] Steps lead to the temple, which has a sharply pointed roof, the walls made of large blocks; and in front of it is an open, square court, reached by another flight of steps, having the sacred pyramidal stone at the centre. Foundations of this building were excavated by Renan from a hill to the south of the town. It seems to have been of an ancient Phoenician design, with large, curiously formed capitals and alabaster paving-stones. A square pedestal, over five metres across, made of large blocks, standing in the site of the court, may have been the actual base on which the obelisk stood.

[1] Amm. xxii. 9. [2] Jer. *Ep.* 58. [3] Renan, *Mission*, 235.
[4] *De dea S.* 6. [5] Included in the Plate.

When the signal had been given by the reddening of the river Adonis, the worshippers smote themselves and wailed, and celebrated funeral rites over the god. Then on the next day they announced that he was alive, and threw his image into the air.[1] Devotees shaved their heads, as the Egyptians did when Apis died, and women who refused had to ransom themselves. The beginning of the festival was further marked by the arrival (later writers say in an earthenware vessel) on the shore at Byblus of a head of the papyrus plant, which the current had carried from Egypt in seven days. As with the meteor which fell into the lake at Aphaca, some imposture was evidently resorted to to keep faith alive, but the legend may point to some early connections with Egypt. Indeed, Alexandria, as Theocritus shows, was an important centre of Adonis worship, while Byblus is prominent in the Osiris legend, and Isis had a temple there.[2]

In several places of the district tombs of Adonis were pointed out; he was said to have been buried at Byblus or Aphaca,[3] and probably in the sculptured monument of Maschnatia.[4] This may have adjoined the temple in Lebanon, a day's journey from Byblus, which Lucian visited.

Like other Phoenician Baalim, Adonis was an agrarian deity, but he remained to the end almost free from solar

[1] This seems the best explanation of Lucian's ἐς τὸν ἠέρα πέμπουσι, which has also been understood of some attempt to represent the ascension of the god to heaven.

[2] Plut., *Is. et Osir.* 15–16.

[3] Melito, a Christian writer contemporary with Lucian, says (Cureton, *Spicil. Syr.* 44) that Balthi, a queen of Cyprus, came to Byblus for love of Adonis; but "Hephaestus, the husband of Balthi, came and slew Tamuz in Mount Lebanon, while he was hunting wild boars, and for that time Balthi remained in Gebal, and she died in the city of Aphaca, where Tamuz was buried."

[4] Renan, *Mission*, 291.

characteristics. Though the date varied in different places, the commonest time for the festival was the early summer; and the death of the god would refer not so much to the reaping of the harvest as to the parching of spring vegetation under a tropical sun; while the resurrection ceremony would serve as a charm to make grass and other plants revive.

The lamentations were attended by dances accompanied by the slender Phoenician flute, *gingras*, and the image of the dead god seems to have been placed in a cave, which Jerome mentions as associated with the rites. Thence it was brought out at varying intervals, oftenest seven days, the usual period of Oriental mourning. It was covered with anemones and red roses, the first of which had sprung from the bleeding wounds of Adonis himself; the others gained their colour when Astarte, in frenzied search for her lover, trod on the thorns of the white rose. In some parts, instead of being buried, the image was dressed as for burial and thrown into the sea or a spring, in conjunction with the picturesque 'gardens of Adonis,'—vases sown with quick-growing seeds, which were no doubt in origin a fertility charm, and long remained popular in Greece.

In many places the resurrection ceremony was of minor importance or altogether disused, but it existed at Byblus, and was a leading feature in the parallel rites of the Phrygian tree-god Attis. Many variations in the ceremonial are hinted at. A woman usually took the part of the distressed goddess, wandering along the river-side as if in search, with a mourning company; and sometimes the death of Adonis may have been dramatically represented.[1] Mythologists told how he spent one-third of every year beneath the earth, and thus Adonis would be

[1] *Cf.* Arnob. iii. 33: Obliterabit offensam Venus si Adonis in habitu gestum agere viderit saltatoriis motibus pantomimum ?

a chthonic deity typifying the deadness of nature through the winter months. This is probably a refinement not belonging to the original and widespread conception of a dying god.

St. Jerome, in his reference to the rites at Bethlehem, " The most august place in the world was overshadowed by a grove of Adonis, and in the cave where once the infant Christ wailed the lover of Venus was lamented," seems to regard the association of the cave with the mysteries, perhaps the burial of Adonis, as subsequent to the birth of Christ. As with the cave or Holy Sepulchre found beneath the temple of Venus-Astarte at Jerusalem, the explanation no doubt is that the Church found it desirable to consecrate with Christian associations places whose sanctity was firmly impressed on the popular mind. Nor was the choice an unwise one. The unique appeal which our faith can make to all races and degrees of civilization is surely due in part to its having superadded to a morality hitherto unapproached much that was best in the systems which preceded it. We may trace the devotion to Divine law and the written word which marked the Jew, the self-denial of the ascetic from the Far East, the grasp of first principles and logical systems which was the boast of the Greek. Yet not the least element in its strength is the appeal to the emotions which echoes the laments of the Syrians and their forlorn queen over the beautiful young god of spring, followed by triumphant rejoicings when he had overcome death and Hades and brought back life to the earth.

Aramaean beliefs are represented in Phoenicia; Berytus, for instance, has dedications to the god of Heliopolis; and as Phoenician towns extended their territories inland, and their merchants migrated to the growing commercial centres of the interior, their beliefs also spread.

One of the most far-reaching of the Phoenician Baalim was *Baalsamin*, whose name occurs on one of the few remaining native inscriptions of Phoenicia.[1] His name means "lord of heaven," *schamin*, and he was a sky and, to a less extent, solar god, whose benefits to worshippers are often recorded on the monuments. Augustine expressly ascribes him to the Phoenicians, and his name is one of the few intelligible words in the jargon of the Carthaginian in Plautus.[2] The cult extended to Palmyra, Auranitis, and Mesopotamia, as Carrhae and Nisibis, where his rites were celebrated with drums and horns. The temple of Baalsamin at Si in Auranitis forms one of the most interesting architectural monuments in Syria.

Another Baal was worshipped at Emesa, a town of mixed population, partly Arabic, partly Aramaean, but with predominantly Phoenician rites. The god's name *Elagabal* probably means merely "the mountain." By the third century A.D., when his cult spread to Rome, he had become a solar deity partially identified with Apollo. The conical stone which was the god's emblem often appears on local coins, resting on an altar supported by pillars, and having eagles in front of it. The altar stands within a temple which has a prostyle façade, reached by steps and surmounted by a pediment. The priest performed a daily ritual before the stone, with rhythmical movements resembling a dance, and accompanied by flutes and drums. He wore a tunic embroidered with gold, and a horned head-dress above a jewelled diadem. There is some doubt as to the name of Elagabal's consort. Aphrodite was worshipped at Emesa;[3] and in the temple of Artemis there was another sacred stone.[4] Whether one of these

[1] At Oum el-Awamid, near Tyre, a town apparently called Laodicea in ancient times, but destroyed before the Roman occupation (Renan, p. 711).

[2] *Poen.* 67.

[3] Malal. 296.

[4] Lampr, *Elag.* 6.

deities was the same as the Salambo whom Elagabalus celebrated at Rome with wailing processions is unknown; but there is evidence that Salambo was a title of Astarte.[1]

The marine god and goddess whom the PHILISTINES brought with them from Crete had in the course of centuries been assimilated to previously existing Semitic cults, and in later years to those of the Greeks. Yet the cities of Ascalon and Gaza retained some distinctive features to a late date. At Ascalon there were two separate goddesses, the Phoenician Astarte and Derceto, whose images were distinguished by a fish tail, a type which, though occurring in the non-Semitic stratum of Babylonian religion, is unknown in the rest of Syria. Adjoining the city was a lake, about which fantastic stories were told,[2] vaguely recalling the fact that a mythical personage had drowned herself there and become an aquatic goddess. As Britomartis met with a like fate, and much evidence connects the Philistines with Crete, it is likely that Derceto was an imported Cretan deity, the scene of her fate being transferred to the lake of Ascalon. In other respects she was assimilated to the indigenous Atargatis, of whom her name is clearly a corruption.

At Joppa, which seems also to have once belonged to the Philistines, a sea-monster was worshipped which Greek mythologists tried to identify with the one which threatened Andromeda. The Ceto which Pliny ascribes to Joppa was probably a mere corruption of Derceto.[3] It is an interesting suggestion that some such worship may have provided a theme for the writer of the allegory of Jonah, who is made to start from Joppa on his ill-fated journey. Derceto seems to be the same as the Aphrodite Urania, mentioned by Herodotus[4] and in the dedications of Syrian

[1] *Ibid.* 7: "Salambonem omni planctu et iactatione Syriaci cultus exhibuit. *Et. Mag.* Σαλαμβάς· περιέρχεται θρηνοῦσα τὸν Ἄδωνιν.

[2] Above, p. 246. [3] *N. H.* v. 13. [4] i. 105.

settlers at Delos. On coins she sometimes appears standing on lions, like other Syrian goddesses, and without the fish form, which was indeed growing unfamiliar by Lucian's time; [1] but the representation on some specimens of a square fish-pond with rows of fish recalls her origin.

Dagon, who had been one of the idols of Ascalon,[2] was probably in early times her *paredros*, but under the Romans various Semitic and Greek gods had superseded him. One of these, difficult to identify in that age of excessive syncretism, was Asclepius Leontuchus, who, with Marnas of Gaza and various Arab deities, was celebrated in the hymns of the eccentric Neoplatonist Proclus.[3] The name may have been selected from the initial letters coinciding with those of the town; and Asclepius-Eshmun was a well-known Phoenician deity, the lions also being a Semitic feature.

Dagon, the chief god of Philistia in Old Testament days, was still worshipped under his old name at Azotus in Maccabean times.[4] Later he disappears, and the gods of the Philistine cities, with the exceptions of Marnas and Derceto, were assimilated to the ordinary Graeco-Syrian pantheon. Marnas, a Semitic word meaning " our lord," assumes such a leading place at Gaza, which had suffered severely from the Jews and was rebuilt in the governorship of Gabinius, that it is hardly possible to avoid identifying him with the old marine deity, brought back by the inhabitants of the district when Gaza was restored. Whatever may have been the case with the original Dagon (and Hebraists are uncertain as to the interpretation of 1 Sam. v. 4), there is no reference to a fish form for Marnas. His principal temple or Marneum was at the centre of the city, and was used as a place of oracular utterance, attended,

[1] *De dea S.* 14.
[2] Jer. *Isai.* 46. 1.
[3] Marinus, *Vit. Procl.* 19.
[4] 1 *Macc.* 10, 83–84.

it was currently believed, by human sacrifices; as the Philistines seem to have designed to make Samson an offering at the same place. His epithet was Cretagenes,[1] recalling the Cretan origin of the Philistines; and outside the city was a second shrine Aldioma, named in honour of the fertilizing power of the god, who under the Romans was primarily a rain power. The temple, as shown on the coins of the early empire, had an ordinary diastyle front with figures of Marnas and the Fortune of Gaza. It may have been rebuilt in the time of Gabinius, much on the plan of that early building where Samson took hold of the two middle pillars on which the house stood;[2] but the account of its condition about A.D. 400 shows that it had been completely remodelled. It was then surrounded by a double peristyle, rested on a crypt, and had a stilted dome at the centre; its doors were of bronze, and a well stood in the courtyard. This style was also used for Hadrian's great temple of Jupiter at Jerusalem, and the Marneum may have dated from his time.

Two ecclesiastical biographies relating to the Gaza district illustrate the way in which the early Church had to struggle against Marnas. Not long after the time of Constantine flourished the ascetic Hilarion, whose life by St. Jerome is preserved. He was regarded as the first to introduce the solitary life into the Syrian Church. Born at Thabatha, five miles from Gaza, he studied at Alexandria, and eventually settled in a desert part infested by robbers, seven miles from the Gazan port Maiumas. His only food was a few figs after sunset, and he fell into an emaciated state, his mind a prey to supposed demoniac assaults. It happened that Aristaenete, the Christian wife of a Roman official, was passing through Gaza with her three children, who all sickened of a semi-tertian fever. The mother,

[1] Steph. Byz. Γάζα. [2] *Judic.* 16. 29.

advised of the hermit's sanctity, went out to his hut and begged him to overcome the evil influence of Marnas, who had caused the sickness. When the sun set he consented to come, and the children recovered so unexpectedly that many persons were converted and embraced a monastic life. Another visitor appealed to the saint, Italicus, a Christian of Gaza. He was running a chariot in the Circensian games against one of the town councillors who professed the cult of Marnas, and was thought able with the help of magic arts to check the horses of Italicus and urge on his own. The Christian was unwilling himself to resort to magic, but received from the saint a cup of water, by sprinkling which over horses and chariot they were made to go at a furious rate, while those of his adversary lagged behind. The contest had been regarded as one between the rival religions, and as the horses of Italicus reached the goal the shout was raised, *Marnas victus est a Christo*. Notwithstanding this and other miracles, the heathens still remained the dominant party. Constantine had already raised the harbour town Maiumas, where Christians were numerous, to an independent position, with the title of Constantia and a bishop of its own. Julian, however, made it again dependent, the magistrates and public offices being henceforth shared between Gaza and Maiumas, which latter only retained separate clergy and church lands. An attempt of the Gazans to annex the episcopal see of their rivals was defeated by the provincial synod of Palestine.

When, however, Julian's pagan sympathies became more manifest, disorders broke out at Gaza. Three Christians who were charged with violating a temple were dragged from prison by an excited mob, brutally murdered in the streets, and their bodies burned at the place where dead animals were thrown. The governor, who attempted

to punish the rioters, was dismissed from his office by Julian.[1] Hilarion himself was obliged to leave Syria, and died in exile, the monastery which he had founded being destroyed.

Another biography referring to a generation later, the life of Porphyrius, bishop of Gaza in the time of Arcadius, by his honest but credulous deacon, Marcus, describes the final issue of that conflict of forces which began when " Dagon fell upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord."

Most of Syria was now Christian, and the death of bishop Aeneas of Gaza raised the hope that a firm champion of the faith might take his place, and repress the arrogance of the pagans. The archbishop of Caesarea, Joannes, on being consulted, advised the appointment of Porphyrius, a Thessalonian, who, after being trained in theology in Egypt, had joined the cave-dwelling hermits of Palestine. His approach to the city was not auspicious. The pagan villagers strewed the Gaza road with thorns, stakes, and mud, and raised foul smoke as he and his companions passed. Soon after his arrival an oracle was brought from the gloomy Marneum that the drought then prevailing was due to Porphyrius, who was exercising a malefic influence. When there had been no rain for two months the pagans gathered in the temple and offered many sacrifices to Marnas, as the lord of rain; for seven days hymns were sung and processions organized to a sacred place outside the city, probably the Aldioma already mentioned. It was next the turn of the rival congregation. After a vigil in the church, accompanied by thirty prayers, thirty genuflexions, and scripture readings, they marched out at dawn, carrying a cross, to a shrine where relics of martyrs were preserved; and after similar prayers and prostrations returned to the city. Their

[1] Soz., *H. E.* v. 9.

efforts had, however, been so successful that a violent thunderstorm broke on them, and for some time, owing to the malice of the heathen, they were shut out of the city gate. Some of their opponents, nevertheless, impressed by the miracle, cried out, "Christ alone is God!" "He alone has conquered!" and embraced the faith.

Yet the general hostility continued. A servant of the bishop was cruelly beaten; and the bringing of what was believed to be a corpse into the holy city by his companions caused further ill-will. Porphyrius next despatched the deacon, Marcus, to the capital, with an introduction to Chrysostom, who had then left Antioch for Constantinople; and with the help of the chamberlain, Eutropius, an imperial order was obtained for closing the temples of Gaza. However, the official who was charged with its execution proved open to bribery; and, finding that members of his congregation were unfairly excluded from municipal offices, the bishop resolved on a direct appeal at court. This was approved by the archbishop of Palestine, and accompanied by him, Porphyrius and his deacon set sail in wintry weather. At Rhodes they were advised by an anchorite to seek help from Amantius, a chamberlain of the empress, and to prophesy that she should shortly bear an heir to the throne. Theodosius II. was born not long after their arrival, and the Syrians, who had already enlisted the sympathies of the empress, succeeded in placing in the hands of the infant, as he was carried away from the baptismal ceremony, a petition that the idols of Gaza might be overthrown and the church endowed. Arcadius, though little disposed for religious persecution, unable to reject his son's first request, signed a decree empowering Cynegius, a quaestor and zealous Christian, to requisition military aid, and burn all idols, travelling by the public post, the cost being defrayed from the imperial treasury.

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The bishop was the first to arrive in Gaza, and his return was accompanied by a miracle. A marble column stood at the centre of the city, supporting a statue of Aphrodite, perhaps, though now all in human form, representing the ancient Derceto. It had been greatly reverenced, especially by women, who lighted lamps and burned incense to it, receiving in dreams counsels as to marriage, from which many unhappy unions resulted. As the bishop's procession carrying a cross passed by, the demon leapt out and destroyed the statue, which injured some of its worshippers in its fall. The fate of its consort, Marnas, could not now be deferred; for numerous though the pagans were, they could not hope to resist the strength of the Byzantine empire when once seriously exerted. Cynegius arrived with a military *dux*. A strong force of soldiers and civil guards was drafted in, and billeted in the houses of the richer pagans, who had fled to neighbouring villages. A threatening mob was dispersed by the clubs of the soldiers, and a number of temples, those of the Sun, Aphrodite, Apollo, Persephone, Hecate, the Heroes, and Fortune, were demolished; while idols, collected in Gaza and the district, were consumed. The Marneum still remained. The priests had blocked the inner doors with large stones, carried down the images and sacred vessels to subterranean vaults, and escaped by a secret passage; so that it was found impossible to force an entrance. Another miracle now intervened. A child of seven who could speak nothing but Syriac began to prophesy in Greek, ordering the Marneum to be set alight by smearing pitch, sulphur, and lard on the bronze doors. The enclosing wall was to be retained, and a church built on the spot. The bishop was informed, and after further inquiries the divine command was carried out, in the course of which a number of magical books and rules of initiation were discovered and destroyed.

The flagstones of the temple, which were held to be so sacred as not to be trodden on, especially by women, were used to pave the road outside the new cruciform church, for which the empress, Eudocia, contributed a number of pillars of Carystian marble.

The cults of the ARABS of Syria were like in kind to those of the other Semitic peoples, but less developed and with a greater leaning to polytheism and nature-worship, besides strong magical tendencies, displayed, for instance, in the use of philtres.[1] The chief god, as in Syria, represents a deity changing from a giver of fertility to a solar power, and, as in the less advanced Syrian centres, his image was a mere mass of stone. Most of our information is archaeological, relating to the period after the annexation of Arabia under Trajan. Even before that, Greek and Syrian influences had spread over the district, which had long enjoyed little but nominal freedom. Strabo, writing under Tiberius, gives a number of particulars of the Syrian Arabs, showing that their trade was extensive, their houses richly adorned, and their lands fertile. There were, of course, marauding tribes scattered over the deserts which bordered on and mingled with the settled districts; but the Nabataeans had long been familiar with the resources of civilization, and in particular, abandoning the abstinence from wine which distinguished most of the Arab race, had acclimatized the vine in their country.

The worship of DUSARES, the chief god of Petra, extended over the whole Nabataean kingdom, to Palmyra, and to part of the Arabian peninsula. Even at this late date gods were looked on as brought away with them by migratory tribes.[2] The solar character of Dusares comes out in the

[1] Jos., *Ant.* 4, 1: *φαρμακιστόταται δέ εἰσι γυναικῶν αἱ ἐκ τῆς* Ἀραβίας.

[2] *Cf. C. I. S.* ii. 113; Dussaud, *Voyage Arch.* 171: Θεοῖς *τοῖς καταγομένοις ἐκ γαίης ἀλλοδαπῆς ἔνθα εἰς* Πέτραν.

custom[1] of setting up an altar on the flat roofs of the stone houses, of which many survive in the Haurân, and daily pouring libations and offering incense to the sun. In some parts the planet Mars was sacred to him, and in Greek dedications he usually appears as Dionysus, his temples and monuments being adorned with grapes and vine-clusters.

Many Arab coins show the sacred stone-block resting on a large base in the form of an altar with steps in front, as those of Adraa (Edrei) in the Antonine age. Those of Bostra, of somewhat later date, represent three stone blocks on a stage, all within a laurel wreath; above are seven rectangles, conjectured to be the show-bread which was offered on the altar; while the three stones may indicate that the north Semitic conception of the triple nature of the deity had extended among the Arabs.

The remains of temples are of comparatively late date, for the Arabs of the early empire no doubt contented themselves with hill-altars and open-air shrines. Three sacred places have been found at Petra, two of them rock-hewn, consisting of one court with an altar at the end; one only of a block of sandstone cut in the hollow of the rock, and reached by four steps. On these the priest would stand to sacrifice, pouring the blood over the sacred stone.

The Actian games are often mentioned on coins of Bostra, which bear the legend, in Latin after Bostra had gained colonial rights, *Actia Dusaria Col. Metr. Bostrenorum.* These games probably took place at the vintage in the same years as the Greek Olympia, both at Adraa and Bostra; and, as in the Jewish sabbatical year, part of the produce went to the poor. People from other parts of the East would be present, and on the coinage the god is sometimes given a form which would be more familiar to Greeks and

[1] Strab. xvi. 4, 26.

Syrians. Thus he wears the *calathus* of the god of Heliopolis, or has a human head with the ram's horns of Ammon, suggesting commercial relations with Egypt, which are also evidenced by an Isiac temple at Petra. The consort of Dusares, Allath,[1] was worshipped both by the Syrian Arabs and in the peninsula. Her chief sanctuary was at Taif, near Mecca, where in a valley were inviolable trees and animals, and a shrine with the sacred square white stone. Above this was a hollow containing the treasure of the goddess—rich clothes, jewels, incense, gold and silver. In Syria she was partially identified, like other goddesses, with the planet Venus; and the Arabs who brought offerings to Atargatis at Hierapolis no doubt felt her to be the same as their native deity.[2] In the more hellenized parts, as Trachonitis and Auranitis, Allath appears as Athena, but lacking Athena's attributes. Thus the entry to her temple at Danul el Alya in the Ledja shows her image at the centre of the lintel, with vine-clusters recalling her consort, Dionysus-Dusares, round the framework of the door. At Palmyra, where she is associated with the solar god Malakhbel, she wears a radiated nimbus and sceptre. Another consort of Allath, occurring in north Arabia, but not in the earlier period in Syria, was Allah, the father of the Djinns, whose cult a few centuries later was destined to sweep over the empire to the Atlantic and the Pyrenees.

[1] *Cf.* Hdt. i. 131, iii. 3, called Alilat or Urania. At Salkhad, east of Bostra, is a dedication to her by the priest-king Rouhou (*C. I. S.* ii. 182).

[2] Luc., *De dea S.* 10.

CHAPTER XII

ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS

"Les sujets du Levant n'apprennent pas seulement à l'Italie la solution élégante de problèmes architectoniques; ils lui communiquent leur amour de la decoration luxuriante et de la polychromie violente; ils imposent à la plastique et à la peinture religieuse ce symbolisme compliqué, où se plaît leur esprit abstrus et subtil."

CUMONT.

EXCEPT for the famous cities of Baalbek and Palmyra, the architecture of Syria has only been closely studied in comparatively recent times, when explorers, chiefly French and American,[1] have extended their researches over the once populous but now almost deserted inland districts, especially those north and south of Damascus. Here there is little opening for a settled population unless irrigation and agriculture are carefully studied; and while the districts near the coast, together with a few inland towns in oases or by large rivers, such as Aleppo, Damascus, and Homs, have been continually inhabited since Roman times, and have constantly renewed their buildings, smaller and more remote townships, whose very name is unknown, remain little changed in their main features, exemplifying all styles from the age of Trajan to that of Mohammed.

This period is, on the whole, one of architectural development, with few traces of decadence at any time. Local variations occur, but the general characteristics are Greek,

[1] The works of de Vogüé, Renan, Humann and Puchstein, and especially the report of the Princeton expedition, should all be consulted.

a style already established in the Seleucid era. Certain Oriental features are superadded, as the use of domes and some peculiarities of ornamentation, especially as Christianity reinforced the native revival; while distinctively Roman features, the use of bricks, of mortar, or vaults, are not widespread.

The preference for a Greek style did not, however, lead to any general adoption of the classes of buildings which real Greek towns, even of the second rank, considered indispensable. The great cosmopolitan centres of the coast, or colonies like Bostra in the interior, might boast of theatres, gymnasia, circuses, amphitheatres, etc., but these had no place in the typical Syrian towns. Some of these were primarily residential. Groups of detached villas open on to large courtyards, and sometimes have a two-storied colonnade on one or more of their sides. There may be one or two churches, the remains of a convent, and public baths, but no provision for defence, a sign that "Roman peace" was still a genuine protection in the fourth and fifth centuries. In the vicinity would be vine and olive yards, from which the inhabitants derived their chief support, and on some adjoining hill a series of fine rock-tombs. Other places would have a more definitely industrial character, with a square market-place surrounded by porticoes, and rows of shops opening on to the streets. Such shops were usually two-storied buildings, with a shallow portico in front surmounted by a covered gallery. There is no provision for lighting the lower rooms, which were probably mere storehouses, the goods being put out for sale by day in the front portico under some kind of awning, while the dealers would live on the upper floor, from which doors and windows opened to the gallery. These galleries would often be used for sleeping in, like similar but larger additions to Syrian caravanserais. References

are made in the inscriptions to weavers, smiths, fullers, general dealers (ἀγορασταί), and builders, in such towns; and there would be poor quarters, with the houses close together, often up against the town wall, or themselves forming an enclosing wall. Larger towns had colonnaded streets, along which lay bazaars, as well as basilicae, streets of tombs, and massively built houses. These, though in the country towns seldom more than two stories high, had much care bestowed on them. The rooms are large and well lighted, with plastered walls, often displaying the remains of paintings; mosaic work ornaments the floors, and the façade is often set off by a two-storied colonnade with Ionic or Corinthian details.

The building materials vary greatly, according to the natural resources of the district. In north central Syria the remaining buildings show that wood must have been used for many of the fittings, window and door frames, shutters, roofs of basilicae or galleries; but farther south stone was made to do duty even for these, showing that in Auranitis wood has always been scarce. Mortar was little used in Syria, stone blocks, often of great size, being laid dry. In Auranitis, however, and the volcanic districts to the north-east, the only common stone was a hard, black basalt, which was more suitable for cutting into small pieces and forming into arches than for providing solid beams of stone. This basalt was worked by the eastern tribes from very early times. A familiar example is the " bedstead of iron," nine cubits long, of Og, the king of Bashan[1] (the Roman Batanea), doubtless some ancient basalt sarcophagus.

The architecture of Syria falls throughout into two main classes—the *arcuated* and the more purely Greek *trabeated*, with flat lintels and imposts. The distinction is partly

[1] Deut. iii. 11.

local, arched structures, as already said, being commoner where large blocks were difficult to cut; and the arch seems to have been more affected in the Arab districts than among Aramaean populations, which lived in closer touch with the Greek styles. Yet examples of buildings with semicircular arches side by side with the Greek column and beam are numerous, and sometimes a single doorway may include both features by the curious device of the arcuated lintel. Here a semicircular piece is cut clean out of the lower surface of an ordinary square lintel, a device also occurring in windows, which seldom show a true arch. In public buildings, such as temples, the arch is rarer than in private, and is often limited to the transverse arches which supported a sloping stone roof. In some parts the trabeated style receives an addition which, though hardly graceful, adds much to its strength; a bracket is attached to both sides of the capital, providing a more solid support for the superstructure.

Barrel vaults occur, especially for covering a rectangular space in front of an apse, but groined vaults seem unknown. Round apses are common, sometimes surmounted by a semi-dome; and Christian churches occasionally terminate in a triple apse.

The variety of mouldings, ranging from the purely Greek to Oriental masses of fruit, flowers, and figure-work, is very great, especially in the later period; but even with classical mouldings the Syrian architects liked to add distinctive features. Thus the Doric capital may show rosettes, leaves or stars; the Corinthian, foliage deeply cut and twisted into a knot. Some peculiar window mouldings are also described by the Princeton archaeological expedition, as, for instance, a curved string course carried in an undulating line over a series of windows. Friezes and the capitals of doorposts show great elegance of treatment, and are ornamented

with honeysuckle and acanthus leaves, or disks which have foliated or geometrical patterns, or a kind of wing attached.

In the Arab parts of Syria Oriental features are more pronounced. There is a tendency to cover the whole of a vacant space with relief carving, and the decorations include many animal figures, often surrounded by leaves or flowers and twisted or interlaced rosettes. The horse, lion, and buffalo (which last is still found in these parts), are favourite designs, and there are scenes representing combats between lions and bulls. Arches are here used throughout large buildings, often with the ornament appropriate to classical entablatures.

The primitive Semitic shrine would be an altar or sacred column on the top of a hill, sometimes with an enclosing wall, but no roof. Such lofty situations were closely associated with the deity, who, indeed, often takes his name solely from the hill—the "god of Casius," "of Carmel," or "of the mountain."[1] Traces of such a plan survived even when foreign influences led to the adoption of covered temples. A high wall built of large blocks, and a wide open courtyard, were still characteristic features; sometimes an inner court succeeded, and the actual shrine was comparatively small. One or two columns would still stand before the principal entrance, and a laver from which water was drawn for the priest's ablutions or for use in the sacrifices was placed in the same part. The temple had an inner sanctuary containing the image or other symbol of the deity; or it might be so small as to be all sanctuary, the entrance to which was allowed only to priests, while a sacrificial altar stood outside in the court. Adjoining was frequently some kind of cloister,

[1] *Cf.* the dedication of two carved lions "to the mountain god," as a result of a warning in a dream, near Sidon (Renan, *Mission*, 397).

connected with priests' dwellings. The temple was surrounded on one or more sides by rows of columns, and was usually reached by a tall flight of steps. The actual plan varied. Of the purer classical style the temple of Burdj-Bakirka, a second-century building on the northern side of the Djebel Barisha, may be taken as an example—tetrastyle with fine Corinthian capitals, somewhat similar to work at Baalbek, but with less elaborate ornament. Temples towards the borders of Arabia present more distinctive types. A fine example is the shrine of Baalsamin at Si, which, though often attributed to Herod the Great, who is commemorated by a statue, seems to have been built by the Nabataean king Malchus II., who came to the throne about 47 B.C. It was enlarged at subsequent dates, the most Oriental features being the latest, about the end of the first century A.D. There is an entrance gateway, then an outer and an inner court, lastly a paved peristyle court on which the temple itself opens. This is of large size, with towers projecting at each angle of a two-storied façade, joined by a small portico of two columns with a recessed doorway. The temple itself was in two portions, one within the other, and the arcades show a mixture of Greek and Oriental design, with bell-shaped Corinthian capitals adorned with disks and cable-moulding. The upper story was added after the rest, and has a great variety of vine-clusters and figure-work. The peripterous temple of Souweda, also in Nabataean territory, shows a somewhat similar combination of Greek style with alien details. Altars are small and square, with a shallow basin, the angles of the top often adorned with clusters of foliage, between which is a relief carving resembling the steps of a cross.[1]

Christian churches show clearly the influence of the

[1] Renan, *Mission*, 162-163.

temples which had preceded. The commonest form is that of the basilica with aisles and an eastern apse (sometimes surmounted by a dome), or a square sanctuary. The aisles end in small eastern chapels. The principal entrances would be on the side, and a west door is often lacking. The more ornate doorway towards the east was used by the clergy, and probably by the men in the congregation, who sat towards the front. Other churches were aisleless, but their chancels, though lacking the side chapels, were otherwise similar, and colonnaded cloisters were frequent. Though little remains of figure-work in these churches, relief carving is much employed, sometimes extending to such details as the chancel rails. Conventual churches had a more elaborate plan; sometimes a double court or cloister with chambers ranged round it, western chapels to the church, and a bell-tower at one corner of the buildings. The ground-plan of the convent of Der Nawa, north of Damascus, is a valuable example; and among the finest Christian remains in Syria is the great church at Kalat-Siman, east of Antioch, dedicated to Symeon Stylites, once one of the chief centres of pilgrimage in the East. The original pillar of the saint formed a central point, on which four large basilicae converged in a cruciform design, the resulting group of eight arches recalling the octagon of Ely. Every alternate arch opened to an apsidal chapel. The principal apse is elaborately ornamented, and the columns, some of which are twisted, have Corinthian capitals. The principal entrance was on the south, and attached to the south-eastern angle is a small basilica with remains of monastic buildings beyond.

The commonest design for tombs was a square rock-hewn chamber, or series of chambers, reached by a flight of stone steps, and containing rows of recesses for the sarcophagi, one over the other. When the entrance was

in the side of the hill steps were not needed, and the face of the rock round the entrance was sometimes cut into a façade, with carved pillars and frieze. The doorway was blocked with a stone which could be rolled into a hollow in the entrance-passage. Such tombs often stood in private gardens or vineyards,[1] especially in Phoenicia, where both vault and floor are found pierced with curious holes, perhaps mere soundings. Other forms of tomb were stone canopies erected over a sarcophagus in the open, a tumulus of earth heaped over a small sepulchral chamber, or, as at Palmyra, a tomb-tower in several stories. These towers form a ring three miles about, on hills adjoining the town, and in some cases communicate with underground vaults. They have staircases in the thickness of the wall, and are tall and square, battering slightly. The doors are lofty, with inscribed niches, once containing statues; and within are tall sepulchral recesses separated by fluted pilasters or adorned with coloured bas-reliefs.

Carved or inscribed pillars were also used as sepulchral monuments, especially where Arab influence was strong. Sometimes these stand alone, and show figures of the deceased and his family in relief; or he may be so far deified as to be represented standing on an animal.[2] The sacredness of the dove was so strongly realized that real pigeon-houses containing birds, not Roman *columbaria*, were placed on tombs.[3] Sepulchral inscriptions, chiefly Greek, are shorter and less flamboyant than in many provinces; a favourite conclusion in Syria is "No one is immortal."

One of the most interesting and well-preserved sepulchres is the royal tomb of Hermel near the sources of the Orontes,

[1] *Cf.* ii. Reg. 21, 18 and 26; Ev. Jo. 19, 41.

[2] *Bull. C. H.* 1897, 86, from the valley of the Melas, near Alexandretta.

[3] *Ibid.* 56; Waddington, 2381, 2474.

probably used as the family mausoleum of the house of Emesa.[1] It may date from the time of Augustus, stands on a bare hill of basalt, and is square in shape, of white limestone, about 65 feet high. It has no doors or windows, and rests on a triple base of black basalt. The order is Ionic, and it is adorned with pilasters and a pyramidal roof. Each face has sculptured friezes in high relief, all of hunting scenes, with hounds attacking bears and boars, also stags, boar-spears, bows and quivers. The style is quite classical except for the square pyramid, a feature derived ultimately from Egypt; but the hunting designs are a typically Oriental decoration.

What must once have been one of the most remarkable sepulchral groups in western Asia stands on the conspicuous tumulus of Nemrud-Dagh in Commagene, and dates from about the middle of the first century B.C. There was a central mound containing the tomb, adjoining which were terraces for open-air sacrifice. Grouped round the mound was a circle of immense columns, supporting colossal statues seated on stone chairs. On the same columns were carved a number of reliefs and Greek inscriptions. The general conception of this memorial, on one of the wildest spurs of the Taurus range, is grandiose in the extreme; and the mingling of Greek and Oriental features in the titles and details illustrates the stage attained by one of the less civilized native dynasties of Syria in the early days of Roman suzerainty.

The king Antiochus, who built the mausoleum for himself, attached to it lands and revenues for the periodical commemoration of himself, his gods, and ancestors; and various sacred vessels were dedicated for the purpose. The days of his birth and coronation were to be specially celebrated with costly sacrifices and offerings of frankincense and

[1] *Bull. C. H.* 1897, 614.

other spices, by priests clothed in Persian attire, which probably included a golden diadem. The figures on the pillars were over 16 feet high, and represent identifications of various Greek and Persian gods, as Apollo-Mithras in a conical cap, Zeus-Ormusd in a pointed tiara, Heracles-Artagnes with a club; as well as Commagene, the goddess of the state, wearing a mural crown, and the deified Antiochus himself. Each of these powers had a separate altar, the other pillars supporting lions or eagles. The reliefs are chiefly concerned with the double line of descent of the king, or, as the inscription calls it, " the most fortunate root of my lineage ": through his father Mithridates from the old Achaemenid dynasty of Persia, right back to Darius, the son of Hystaspes; through his mother Laodice from Seleucus, the first Greek king of Syria, and so from Alexander, son of Philip, who, though no kinsman of Seleucus, might be looked on as the progenitor of all the Macedonian dynasties in Asia. One relief shows the goddess Commagene crowned with a *calathus*, holding a cornucopia, and offering the king apples and corn. Another is astrological, depicting a lion covered with stars, a crescent, and the three planets, Heracles or Mars, Apollo or Mercury, and Jupiter, which may have been visible at the king's birth or formed a typical royal horoscope. In spite of the ordinary use of Aramaic in the country, Commagenian civilization scarcely seems of a Semitic type.

A less elaborate monument near Karakusch, by the road from Samosata to Melitene, also has a sepulchral tumulus, which is surrounded by three groups of three Doric columns. The side columns supported bulls, lions, and eagles, and the central appear to have had reliefs representing the father of Antiochus taking leave of various members of his family—his mother Isias, his sister Antiochis, and his niece Aca. One such relief remains, a woman in

a *chiton* and veil offering her hand to a man standing in Oriental costume, wearing a tiara. Somewhat similar groups of pillars, but united by a simple stone beam, occur in Syria two or three centuries later, standing over subterranean sepulchral chambers, and probably once supporting statues. There seems, however, to be no example of a circular grouping, as in the Commagene monuments.

At Palmyra, besides the well-known sepulchral towers, there are several subterranean sepulchres of about the third century A.D. One of the most elaborate, situated beneath a tumulus to the south-west of the town, consists of a central chamber opening by round arches to three others, the walls of which are covered with recesses capable of containing some hundreds of coffins. Some of these sarcophagi resemble mediæval altar-tombs, the family being represented in stone resting on cushions; but the most interesting features are the fresco paintings on the walls and vault of the chamber opposite the entrance. They are shown off by a curiously carved frieze.

One scene appears to represent the recognition of Achilles when in female costume by Odysseus. The young warrior raises a shield in one hand, and holds up his flowing girded *chiton* with the other. Odysseus and a companion wear long cloaks and pointed caps, and also raise shields. Deidamia and her sisters wear a girded *chiton* and a sleeveless cloak. Beside this scene is a series of medallions representing persons buried in the vault, painted on the pilasters separating the recesses, on blue ground within a foliaged yellow circle. The male figures are bearded, with short hair and *chiton*, and a scroll in one hand; the female wear high head-dresses. hood and veil, with pearl earrings and necklace. Below each medallion is a white-robed winged Victory, supporting it in uplifted arms and

standing on a blue globe. At the bottom of the pilaster an oblong space encloses birds with beasts, chiefly varieties of deer.

Such frescoes are not of frequent occurrence, walls having been usually too much exposed for them to survive. The internal plastering of Syrian houses frequently shows traces of colour, but complete paintings are almost confined to tombs, and these are chiefly of the Christian age. They show sacred symbols such as the fish, the seven-branched candlestick, the sacred monogram, or sometimes the head of the deceased. A vault at Midj-leyya has an interesting painted group of water-birds, including ducks in yellow and red, surrounded by reeds. Though nothing survives of it, there is evidence of an important school of canvas-painting at Antioch in the fourth century.[1]

The kindred art of mosaic work has left numerous examples. Mosaics were common in the pavements of churches and baptisteries, consisting chiefly of rectangular panels alternating with interlaced bands, or diamond or square patterns worked in various colours. Vine patterns are a favourite device, and occasionally some figure-work is introduced. Thus in the church of Kheilit Hass are four peacocks standing in pairs; their tails are crossed, and worked in yellow and green, with a flowing vine above. This device is formed of small cubes of stone, chiefly red and yellow, set in cement. A more elaborate example is in the floor of the fifth-century bath at Serdjilla.[2] This is a well-preserved building, showing three chambers, the chief room having a balcony resting on Corinthian columns. The floor mosaic is in the form of a large oblong, containing

[1] *Cf.* Basil, *Hom. in Barlaam*, where the painters of Antioch are invited to depict the sufferings of the Indian martyr Barlaam with their bright colours on his tomb. Asterius, *Hom.* lxi., has an *ecphrasis* on the shrine of Euphemia, which was thus adorned.

[2] *Rev. Archéol.* 1901, ii. 62.

animal designs. A tiger with black and orange stripes attacks a gazelle, formed of brown and grey marble, with black horns; a lion devours a wild-ass, and a leopard pursues a deer. Other designs are a bear running, a stork, and a pomegranate-tree. At the centre an inscription surrounded by coloured bands shows that the bath was presented to the town by Julianus and Domna in A.D. 473.

Another late elaborate mosaic was discovered by Renan[1] at Kabr Hiram, five miles from Tyre, and removed to France. The place seems once to have been a cemetery for a neighbouring Phoenician hill-town on the boundary of the ancient tribe of Asher, but a village grew up in the area, and a Christian church there was floored with a finely coloured series of pictures. The date has been variously attributed to the fourth and sixth centuries. The local bishop (*chorepiscopus*) and deacon dedicated it to the patron St. Christopher, in the name of the farmers and labourers of the place, almost certainly in the year 576; but the absence of Christian symbolism, and the classical style throughout, would suggest an earlier date for the mosaic itself. A fig-tree, by spreading its roots over the floor of the ruined edifice, fortunately protected it from injury by the plough. The nave floor has perhaps the finest work, thirty-one medallions formed of foliage and flowers, which spring from a vase at each of the four corners of the piece, and enclose a variety of animal figures, men engaged in agriculture, others pressing grapes with a cross-handled pole, children playing, etc. Along the aisles are seventy-four circles, less gracefully foliaged, filled with symbols of the months, with their Syro-Macedonian names added, of the winds and seasons, as well as elephants, other animals, and birds. Between the columns of the arcades are pairs of animals separated by trees, one pursuing the

[1] *Cf. Mission*, pl. 49.

other, as lion and deer, dog and hare, leopard and boar. The chief groups are enclosed in a fine interlaced border.

Mosaics are frequently much superior to the buildings which contain them, and were probably the work of travelling artists, who were hired by local magistrates or benefactors. In the mosque at Damascus a glass mosaic remains, a variety which often replaced stone in Byzantine times.

Statues are not very common, and the rough limestone or basalt of Syria was ill fitted for accurate workmanship. In Phoenicia, where statuary was most cultivated, the style in the early period is chiefly Egyptian, in the later Greek, the Rhodian school supplying many models to Phoenician carvers.

Few seem to have been made in Christian times, and much ancient figure-work has fallen a victim to Moslem fanaticism. Statues were used, though less frequently than reliefs, in tombs, and they often adorned the niches of pillars in colonnaded streets. Those of the second and third century found at Palmyra, chiefly in tombs, and now dispersed among many museums of Europe, are useful for illustrating costumes, and show more of local features than the paintings. They are usually of calcareous stone, grey or yellow, the eyes painted black, with decorations picked out in various colours, and a red inscription. Men mostly hold a staff; women, who are richly attired with jewels, elaborately dressed hair, and finely bordered robes, hold a spinning basket, ball of thread, and similar articles; children, a dove or grape cluster.

Bronze ornaments are fairly frequent, and bronze was used for the capitals of pillars in colonnades. Earthenware lamps are of many patterns, some with the names of local gods, or sacred symbols, as, at Palmyra, the crescent and radiated star. Oval *tesserae* of earthenware have

similar designs, or inscriptions. Glass funerary urns, probably from the great glass factory of Sidon, are common in Phoenicia, and glass vessels from the houses of eastern Syria, the parts which have been least interfered with, are often beautiful, with a great variety of design.

Relief carvings are numerous and of great interest. The Oriental liking for elaborate ornament becomes more and more prominent in the later period. Friezes and lintels are covered with such devices as the acanthus, vine clusters springing from vases, trefoils, or figures within circles. Of figures the peacock seems a favourite; even such a simple building as a well-house has two of these birds drinking from a vase, cut in a panel of the door.

At the temple of Si there are early carvings in high relief, both animal and human figures, the lions and eagles finely executed; and at Shakka, a colony of Septimius Severus in the same district, is a rare example of grotesque in Syrian sculpture, fat human figures and birds with abnormally long legs.

The fort of Qalat Ezraq in Auranitis has on its lintels grape clusters, birds, horses, antelopes, and fish enclosed in circles; and a larger fourth-century fort at Mechatta, east of the Dead Sea, has an elaborate façade of somewhat similar character. The space is worked over like a Persian carpet, with vine clusters springing from vases and forming wreaths, within which are winged horses and other animals.

Large sarcophagi frequently show elaborate relief carvings, the subjects being usually religious or relating in some way to death. In one rock-hewn tomb at Dehes mythological figures aie worked on the spaces bewteen the recesses, as Heracles and Geryon's oxen, Medusa, the Hydra, and Athena with her tall helmet. Such figure-work has few Oriental features, and is disused in the Christian age.

The smaller details of buildings show great elegance

and freedom in the carving, the friezes and other parts of comparatively humble dwellings being thus adorned. Vegetable forms are here the most frequent, especially vine patterns and flowers; but more conventional designs, such as the egg and dart or the interlaced bands called guilloche, are common in the ruined towns of central Syria. Lintels of private houses in the Christian age often have a central cross, round which are arranged the letters of the builder's name, enclosed in a vine border; or, again, some pious text in Greek, designed to avert evil: "The Lord keep the going out from this house and the coming in; when the cross is set before it the evil eye shall not prevail." "If God is on our side who can be against us?"

The rocky hill-sides which occur in most parts of Syria gave opportunity for many carvings of native workmanship, usually religious. Reference has been made to the Adonis groups near Aphaca, and to the mysterious Charoneion above Antioch. Two, at Gerger and Selek, not far from the Commagenian royal tombs, commemorate members of the same family. At the former place is the relief of a king in a long robe, with conical cap and a sword in his girdle. He holds a lance and sacrificial knife. At Selek, on a black basalt pillar, are figures of Antiochus of Commagene, grasping the hand of Heracles, who bears his club. Round the king's neck is a wide collar, on which are figures of lions walking.

One of the most interesting examples of Syrian relief-work occurs in the portico of St. Mark's at Venice.[1] Two pillars of grey marble were brought here by the Crusaders from a Genoese castle at Acre, but they clearly belong to the later Roman age, when old Oriental types were reasserting themselves alongside of Greek technique. They are

[1] *Oriens Christianus*, ii.

divided into three zones, the lowest smooth except for a large cross, the upper richly carved. The middle division has three tiers of circles arranged vertically, and formed by vine tendrils enclosing leaves, grapes, or monograms. One feature familiar in Syria is a fluted vase, flanked by acanthus leaves, with vine clusters issuing from it and supporting a pomegranate. The square capitals, perhaps slightly later than the columns, are finely carved with palm leaves, egg and dart, acanthus, and trees. The monograms in rosettes have been interpreted as *Pataecus Antiochenus*, the former a known Syrian name. There is evidence, too, that a distinct art school existed at Antioch in the fourth century, extending its influence to Italy and the West, and filling up the interval between the decay of the Alexandrine school and the development of Constantinople as an art centre. The Oriental features in these examples are marked. A smooth, solid surface is crowded with ornament; grape clusters spring from a vase, the favourite pomegranate and palm leaves appear; and the whole of the capital resembles work found in the monuments of the Persian Sassanidae.

As late as the age of Justinian there are traces of an artistic and architectural revival, seen in such features as marble floorings, and the construction of large houses and palaces of a somewhat Byzantine type. In consequence of the devastation of the Persians, and the need for strengthening the northern frontiers, this was an age of much rebuilding. A fine example of the period is the group of three great buildings at Kasr ibn Wardan in north Syria[1]: a domed church with fine marbles, a palace with vaulted chambers and galleries, and barracks large enough to hold a thousand men, with painted walls and mosaics.

[1] *Zeitsch. Gesell. für Erdkunde*, 1901, 69.

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